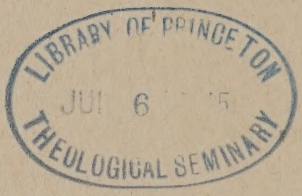

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THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

By

FERDINAND M. ISSERMAN

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To

My Mother and Father

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FOREWORD

MEMBERS of my congregation, pupils in my confirmation classes, and Christian friends have frequently asked for a book which would state the principles of Reform Judaism. *This Is Judaism* is an answer to such requests. In it are briefly outlined for the lay reader the fundamentals of religion as taught in hundreds of Jewish congregations in America which subscribe to Reform Judaism. Because Reform Judaism minimized ritual, it emphasized prophetic teachings and the pulpits of its congregations have become the sounding boards for prophetic idealism.

Part I of this book deals with the historic beginnings of Judaism and indicates acceptance of the tenets of biblical criticism. The views I express I learned in the classrooms of the Hebrew Union College from Julian Morgenstern, then a professor, now president of the college. Dr. Morgenstern's theories about the beginning of Israel's history were outlined in a paper on "The Foundation of Israel's History," read before the Central Conference of American Rabbis at its annual meeting in 1915. Its findings were readily accepted by some and angrily resented by others. As the years have passed the overwhelming majority of Reform rabbis have come to take its conclusions for granted.

Part II outlines the fundamental tenets of prophetic religion, its belief in God, its view of man, its concept of prayer, immortality, etc. There is also a section on Jesus, which will surprise only those not familiar with Reform Judaism.

Part III deals with the application of prophetic religion to life and presents attitudes and views on social issues

which have frequently been endorsed by the Central Conference of American Rabbis and can be found in the reports of its Commissions on Social Justice, International Peace, and Justice and Peace.

While this book represents my interpretation of Reform Judaism, I believe that, except for some details, its conclusions will be accepted by the great majority of my colleagues in the Reform rabbinate.

I am grateful to Jacob R. Marcus, Samuel Rosenkranz and Blandford Jennings for helpful suggestions and criticism and other aid in the preparation of this manuscript, and to Betty Alberstein and Sally Hotchner for secretarial service.

It is a source of satisfaction and an evidence of the temper of Christianity in America that this book on Judaism is being published by a leading Protestant publishing concern.

FERDINAND M. ISSERMAN

Shavuoth 5704
May 28, 1944
Temple Israel
St. Louis, Missouri

Part I

FROM PRIMITIVE SEMITISM TO PROPHETIC JUDAISM

FROM PRIMITIVE SEMITISM TO PROPHETIC JUDAISM

Do You Eat Ham?

DO YOU eat ham? To begin a book on a great religion, the mother of great religions, with such a question may seem frivolous or even irreverent. Yet the answer which a believing Jew gives to it is of tremendous importance. I have frequently put this query to students in my confirmation classes. Invariably, the overwhelming majority answer in the affirmative and a very small minority in the negative. This will surprise many Christians, who have been taught that it is part of the faith of the synagogue to observe certain dietary laws, one of the best known of which is the taboo against eating the flesh of the pig. Why then will Jewish children, coming from homes where Judaism is prized, publicly declare that they do not practice what was for centuries a fundamental of the Jewish religion?

Apparently all those who accept Judaism do not believe exactly alike. There are religious differences among Jews. There are also religious differences among Christians. There are Roman Catholics and Greek Catholics. There are Episcopalians, Lutherans, Baptists, Methodists, Disciples, and members of scores of other denominations who think of themselves as Christians and Protestants, who agree on many things but who also disagree on many things, just like Jews who eat ham and who do not eat ham.

The Jews who do not eat ham have a right to ask those who do to justify themselves. For the words of the Torah are clear:

And the Lord spoke unto Moses and to Aaron, saying unto them: Speak unto the children of Israel, saying: These are the

living things which ye may eat among all the beasts that are on the earth. Whatsoever parteth the hoof, and is wholly cloven-footed, and cheweth the cud, among the beasts, that may ye eat. . . . And the swine, because he parteth the hoof, and is cloven-footed, but cheweth not the cud, he is unclean unto you. Of their flesh ye shall not eat, and their carcasses ye shall not touch; they are unclean unto you. (Lev. 11:1–3, 7–8) *

Whoever reads these words can be in no doubt as to their meaning. It is God's will, according to these words, that men abstain from eating the flesh of the swine. Christians too read this part of the Bible, but they assert that Jesus permitted them to ignore these laws, for he brought a newer word about what God's will is, and that, they say, is to be found in the New Testament. But the Bible of the synagogue contains only the Old Testament; a Jew who eats ham, therefore, cannot give the same reason for doing so that a Christian gives.

Eating ham in itself is not important, but violating the will of God is important. For to the religious person to obey the will of God is the goal of life. Whoever succeeds in doing so is a success in life; whoever fails to do so is a failure. In old-fashioned religious language, a failure is called a sinner. When once I suggested to some of my pupils that in eating ham they were disobeying God, and quoted the Bible to prove my point, they were disturbed and ready to resolve to abstain from it. But they were more disturbed over the fact that their parents had put bacon on their plates and had served them ham sandwiches. Their parents were good people and had tried to teach them the best. They were anxious to have their children believe in and practice the teachings of Judaism. Apparently, they did not think that eating swine's flesh was disobedience to God. Yet these were the words of the Torah, which no one could mistake.

* My Bible quotations are taken from the translation made by American rabbis and published by the Jewish Publication Society of America.

The Torah was and is read on the Sabbath in the temple, and the rabbis frequently quote from it. It is kept in the ark, the most sacred place in the temple, right behind the pulpit on the altar. When the altar doors are opened, the congregation rises in respect to the Torah and its message. When it is taken out of the ark and held by the rabbi, the congregation remains standing. The Torah was honored and appreciated by their parents. Why then did they not obey all of its laws?

Sometimes it is said that Jews abstain from eating pork because of the disease germs which have been found, especially in tropical lands, in the flesh of pigs. This could not be a reason for modern Jews, living in countries where meats are inspected by boards of health established by the government, and where excellent refrigeration is available. Yet many pious Jews today do not eat ham because they believe that thus they are obeying God's command. They reject the rationalization about health. They contend that Jews who eat ham violate God's will as revealed in the Torah, and they add that only in the Torah is God's will revealed.

How Is God's Will Known?

Revelation is a word which teachers of religion use to explain how God makes known his will to man. If the highest good in religion is to obey God's will, then the most important question for the religionist is, Where is his will to be found? How can puny man know the mind of the Most High? Religions differ as to where God's will is revealed. For at least sixteen hundred years, Judaism had a theory of revelation which almost all Jews accepted and the majority accept to this day. It held that God had scoured the universe to find a people to whom he could disclose his will and upon whom he could depend to obey that will and to teach it to all the children of men. A story (midrash) written by some rabbis relates that when God was ready to

make his teachings known to mankind, he summoned the leaders of the earth's seventy nations and asked each whether his people would care to become the divine spokesmen. The seventy refused. Then God approached the Jews, warning them of the difficulties involved in becoming guardians of his word. They accepted. To Moses, their emancipator and leader, he revealed his will for Jews and for all mankind on Mount Sinai. God spoke to Moses. Moses listened very carefully that he might repeat to his people God's words. He also wrote down the words on five scrolls made of skins. These constitute the first five books of the Bible, and are known in Jewish tradition as the Torah, which is read in the synagogue on the Sabbath and has been studied so carefully and continuously by Jews throughout the ages.

As a result of very careful reading of the Torah, the teachers of Judaism, who were known as rabbis (*rabbi* means "my teacher"), found that it contained six hundred and thirteen commandments — rules of life which came direct from God to Moses on Mount Sinai. The duty of every religious person was to obey them all.

Many people today believe that religion is interested only in prayer and in the observance of holy days. For those to whom the Torah is the religious guide, religion is concerned with every phase of life. The Torah is concerned with food, with clothing, with the treatment of animals. The fourth of the Ten Commandments, which deals with the observance of the Sabbath, states that even cattle, dumb beasts, are to rest on the Sabbath. The Torah has laws about the ownership of land, the wages of workers, care for the widow and the orphan, marriage, picking fruits, as well as about the observance of the Day of Atonement and the Passover festival. The six hundred and thirteen laws of the Torah survey all of life. To know these laws, the will of God, became the supreme ambition of every Jew. When he was confirmed (Bar Mitzvah) he stood before the congrega-

tion and read from the Torah to prove that he could know God's will and thus was ready for manhood, for living a righteous life and assuming moral responsibilities.

But six hundred and thirteen laws were many — too many to be easily remembered. And Jews asked, " Are they all of equal importance? " Some rabbis answered in the affirmative. They said, " Be as careful about keeping a light precept as about keeping an important one." Other rabbis answered in the negative. One rabbi said, " The six hundred and thirteen commandments can be reduced to ten — the Ten Commandments."

Another rabbi liked this idea, thought about it, and said that all six hundred and thirteen laws could be reduced to three, in the words of the great prophet Micah:

> It hath been told thee, O man, what is good,
> And what the Lord doth require of thee:
> Only to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God. (Mic. 6:8)

This has frequently been called the greatest definition of religion.

Still another rabbi suggested that all the commandments can be reduced to one: " Love thy neighbor as thyself." This verse is found in the nineteenth chapter of the Book of Leviticus, the same book which contains the law prohibiting ham. That Jesus, around whom Christianity was builded, read and studied what these rabbis of the Talmud had to say is clear from the fact that he too declared that " Love thy neighbor as thyself " is one of the two great commandments.

The Talmud and God's Will

In the course of time, the meaning of some of these many commandments which God had revealed to Moses did not seem quite clear. For example, take the commandment about resting on the Sabbath. What is meant by rest?

Jews, eager to obey God's commandments as he wanted them obeyed, had to know specifically what was meant by Sabbath rest. Rest is not so easy to define today. Is playing tennis rest, or going to see a motion picture, or reading a book? About these things, people differ today. In ancient days, too, men differed about what rest was. If they differed about what God meant by rest, then what was God's will to some would not be his will to others.

But according to the rabbis, God had foreseen all the problems of man, including the speculation about the meaning of rest. To Moses, God had been very clear as to what he meant by rest. Moses had written down in the Torah all the general principles God revealed to him, but the complete explanation of all the six hundred and thirteen laws, which God had also made known, he had not written down. He transmitted them to his successor, Joshua, by word of mouth, and Joshua in turn taught them to the judges (of the Bible). The judges in their turn taught them to the prophets, and the prophets to their successors, the teachers or rabbis. Thus there were a written law, the Torah, and an unwritten law, both of which were considered binding on all. The answers to all these questions about the meaning of God's will were known. The rabbis found hints about them in the Torah, in its apparently superfluous letters and seemingly unnecessary words. They taught that a sacred document like the Torah, which God dictated, not only is perfect but contains no extra word or syllable. Every seemingly dispensable letter had special meaning, perhaps even great significance, and was most sacred and holy.

Lovers of Judaism in all ages therefore pored over the Torah, studied and restudied it. Often teachers would gather to study the sacred book together. When such learned rabbis assembled, fortunate were those who could listen to their discussions and participate in them. If perchance an unknown teacher was present who revealed that

he understood the Torah better than those who sat in the high places, he was immediately recognized and given every honor. These gatherings of rabbis were among the first universities known to history. Their purpose was to make known to humanity the will of God that men might live by it. Even so the first universities of Europe were assemblies of religious men to discuss the teachings of Christianity, and these universities may have been inspired by their Jewish forerunners. Thus was the oral law which God revealed to Moses on Sinai handed down, and thus did it serve to explain in full the meaning of the laws of the Torah.

But tragic days came over the Jews. The temple was destroyed and the insignia of the Caesars flew from the hills of Jerusalem. The Jewish people were scattered over the face of the earth. Many were sold into slavery. But the Jewish schools went on. Rabbis continued to teach the Torah and Jewish children to learn to know the will of God. Rome soon realized that Judea was not conquered so long as Judaism lived, that religion was the secret of the Jew's persevering existence. So she determined to extinguish Judaism. An edict went forth ordering that the Jewish schools be closed and decreeing the death penalty for those who dared to teach the Torah. To the rabbis, the Torah meant more than life. Many defied Rome and were burned at the stake. One of the most famous of these martyrs was Akiba. As he died in the flames he said: " All my life I have known the meaning of the words, ' Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul,' but what ' with all thy might ' meant I was doubtful. Now I know. It means, ' Be ready even to die for the Torah and to give your life for it.' " With his last breath he cried: " Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One."

But before he died Rabbi Akiba had begun a work by which he triumphed over his executioners. Fearing that all the rabbis would be put to death and that the unwritten law would thus be lost, he undertook to make a record of

it. His pupil, Rabbi Meeir, continued his work, and in the year 200 C.E.* Judah Hanassi completed the first writing of the oral law. That book became known as the Mishnah. Jews studied it as devoutly as they did the Torah, the Prophets and the other sacred writings.

Three hundred years passed, and the center of Jewish life shifted from Palestine to Babylonia. There great Jewish universities flourished and the rabbis, using the Torah and the Mishnah, continued their studies of God's will and taught his way of life. The oral law again developed and grew. But another foe of the synagogue rose up. The Persian regime which ruled over Babylon began to suppress Jewish schools and to execute the rabbis, for it too realized that Jews lived by their faith. Again the fear arose that the holy law would be forever lost.

About the year 500 C.E., Samuel and Rab, two titanic figures among Israel's rabbis, edited a huge work which contained the wisdom of the teachers and their explanations of the Torah. This work was called the Gemara and, together with the Mishnah, forms the Talmud (" The Learning "), which from that time until recent days was recognized by most Jews as the constitution of Judaism. Its explanations of the Torah were considered as binding as the laws of Moses. It became for Judaism what the pope is to Catholics and the Bible to Protestants. The Talmud molded, determined and controlled Jewish life. To study it was the goal of all Jews, and those most skilled in it were the heroes and leaders of the community. As in Plato's ideal republic, the wise ruled in Judaism. But their wisdom was concerned with the will of God.

If you were to try to read the translation of the Talmud you would find most of it very difficult. Because it is a difficult book to read all sorts of false rumors have been spread about it. Some ignorant people regard it as a manual of witchcraft. Foes of Judaism, some of them deserters from

* Christian Era.

the synagogue, wrote many untruths about it which are current even today.

What really is the Talmud? It is a book, encyclopedic in scope, which records the discussions of rabbis over a period of a thousand years. It contains their views about science, mathematics, medicine, civil and religious law. It contains also many interesting stories and sermons that set forth the ideals of Judaism. The rabbis were not always in agreement, but usually they were tolerant of those who disagreed and frequently made a record of dissenting opinions. They said that the views of the minority as well as those of the majority represented the will of God. Sometimes Jewish practice even followed the decision of the minority.

Here are a few samples of talmudic material. One rabbi, discussing the question why God had created but one pair, Adam and Eve, declared that God wanted no race to believe itself superior and therefore made all men the physical descendants of the same ancestors. Thus the rabbis emphasized the brotherhood of peoples.

In the Talmud is to be found the famous story about Hillel and Shammai, two rabbis who lived a generation before Jesus. Hillel was progressive and liberal; Shammai was conservative and reactionary. An insolent heathen, seeking to mock Judaism, came to Shammai and asked him to explain his faith while standing on one foot. Shammai was angered, berated the questioner and drove him from his presence. The idol-worshiper went to Hillel with the same question. Hillel answered: " What thou wouldst not have others do unto thee, do not do unto others. All the rest of the law is commentary to this." Thus did the gentle Hillel formulate that rule of life which is known as the Golden Rule — the same rule that the Chinese sage Confucius had set forth and that Jesus, who stated it affirmatively, later popularized for millions.

Another talmudic story tells of a conversation that took place between God and Moses when the Hebrew tribes had

safely passed through the Red Sea and its waters were closing about the pursuing Egyptians. While their foes were drowning, the children of Israel burst into a song of joy over their escape and the annihilation of the hosts of tyranny. Moses observed that God, who had miraculously brought about the salvation of Israel, did not rejoice. He asked, "O Lord, why dost thou not join us in our triumphant song?" God replied, "Moses, how can I rejoice when my children, the Egyptians, are drowning?" Thus did the Talmud teach that God desires men to forgive their enemies and to regard all human beings as their brethren, and that all men, even wicked men, are his children.

But though the Talmud dominated Jewish life, not all Jews could read it. Moreover, in all that mass of material it was not easy to find what one wanted. So Joseph Caro, a famous rabbi, wrote a book which he called *Shulchan Aruch* ("The Prepared Table"), which presented for ready reference all the laws of the Talmud. If you wanted to know what the duties of a Jew were, all you had to do was to consult the *Shulchan Aruch*. Thousands of Jews still use this book and find in it the guidance they seek.

The Torah, the Bible and God's Will

Jews who do not eat ham, as we have seen, base their case on the fact that the Torah forbids it. Jews who do eat ham also are anxious to obey the will of God, but they deny that the Torah was written only by Moses and that it contains what God dictated to him on Mount Sinai. In making this denial they depart radically from the forms of Judaism which have prevailed for several thousand years. At the same time they open new trails for the development of the old faith. For many centuries individual men had wondered whether Moses could have written all of the Torah. They wondered whether, for example, he could have written its closing verses which describe his death and add that "no one had known the place of his grave unto this day."

Unto what day? Unto the day of the writing of these words, long after Moses died? Or again, in the Book of Numbers one reads: " Now the man, Moses, was very meek, above all men who were upon the face of the earth." No meek man would have written this about himself.

These and many similar passages and ideas, some of which are contradictory, led students of the Torah to wonder whether Moses had written its every word. They did not believe that Moses, an intelligent man, would be guilty of contradictions, and that God would have dictated these contradictions to him. The men who made these observations were very religious. They hesitated to admit these thoughts to themselves, and hesitated even more to discuss them with others. Many people's lives were built around the idea that every word of the Torah represented God's will. They would be confused and bewildered if the contrary were proved true; perhaps their lives would be ruined if their faith in the Torah were upset.

A great twelfth-century rabbi, Ibn Ezra, who wrote a book explaining the Torah, admitted at times that all things in the sacred writing were not clear to him, but he did not go into detail for fear of confusing the people. (Incidentally, this is the rabbi about whom Robert Browning wrote his poem, " Rabbi Ben Ezra.") Five hundred years later, in Holland, a brilliant Jewish lad by the name of Baruch Spinoza, whose ancestors had fled from Spain in 1492, studied Ibn Ezra's writings. Thus he came to recognize some of the contradictions in the Torah, and the belief grew on him that God could not have dictated all of it and Moses could not have written all of it. Spinoza was not as solicitous of the religious feelings of others as Ibn Ezra had been. He was above all loyal to the truth. He believed that a religion which could not face the truth was weak and could not endure. To the horror of the leaders of the Jewish community in Amsterdam, he began to speak openly about the difficulties in the holy book. The elders begged

him to desist. They told him to believe what he wanted, but to be silent about opinions which would shatter the faith of Jewish youth, and even of Christian youth, for the church had for centuries held the same views as the synagogue about the Torah. They offered to pension him for life if only he would keep his ideas to himself. Spinoza regretfully refused. He had a duty to truth. Where it led he would follow.

Aghast at his defiance and fearful for the future of the faith, the leaders of the Jewish community expelled Spinoza and threatened with similar punishment any Jew who had anything to do with him. He was thus forced to live away from friends and family. He supported himself by becoming a grinder of lenses. The king of France offered to pension him, but this offer too he refused. He wanted to be free to serve truth. He worked and studied and wrote until, only forty-five years of age, he died of tuberculosis in 1677. A few years ago, when the three hundredth anniversary of his birth was celebrated all over the world, many rabbis in their temples and synagogues honored Baruch Spinoza as a great philosopher, a believer in God and a "God-intoxicated man." At Hebrew Union College, where I studied to become a rabbi, it was part of my preparation to know and even to accept what Spinoza had taught about the Torah. Spinoza was expelled from the synagogue for saying what, three centuries later, professors teach student rabbis.

In the years that have passed since Spinoza's day, scholars have continued to study the Torah and have found ample proof for his views. It is, of course, impossible to set down here all that has been discovered — the many theories that have been advanced, of which some have been disproved and some not fully proved. But all who have studied the Bible from the angle first suggested by Ibn Ezra and later developed by Spinoza have come to the same general conclusions, namely:

1. That the Torah is the work of many men over many centuries.

2. That many of its stories are not historical, but were invented or adapted by religious men to teach their beliefs about God and man.

3. That the writing and editing of the Torah took place over a period of from five hundred to a thousand years. The youngest parts of the Torah date perhaps from the year 300 B.C.E.*

4. That the place of a narrative in the Torah is no index of its age. The youngest story may appear first and the oldest, last.

5. That the Torah reveals the growth of ethics and religion among the ancient Hebrews.

6. That its greatness lies in the fact that through it the wisest religious teachers expressed the noblest ideas about God and man, ideas which form the foundation of three great modern religions, Mohammedanism, Christianity, and Judaism.

7. That the Torah is not the literal word of God, but does set forth God's will as understood by deeply religious men.

In the light of these conclusions the religious Jew who eats ham says that the law prohibiting ham represents not the will of God but the will of man. Undoubtedly it was a wise law for the time and place in which it originated. Because many people died from eating infected pork, some Jewish statesman forbade it and issued the prohibition in the name of God. Today that law no longer has validity. The reasons for which it was decreed are not pertinent now. Therefore man need not obey it. But this does not mean that he may ignore all the laws of the Torah. He may set aside only such laws as were temporary. Many were timeless and eternal and are binding to this day.

* Before the Christian Era.

The Two Creation Stories of the Torah

There have been many guesses as to how the world began. It is natural for human beings to speculate about the beginning of things. All ancient peoples who produced any literature have given us creation stories. Some believed, for instance, that the earth was hatched from an egg as a bird or reptile is hatched. The first chapters of the Torah set forth the ancient Hebrews' beliefs about creation. As you read this account, compare it with the creation stories of other peoples and ask yourself how the ideas of the Hebrews differed.

Oddly enough, the Torah contains two accounts of the creation. One story is to be found at the very beginning of Genesis. Read its majestic words (Gen. 1; 2:1–3). This passage describes how God created the world in six days. God spoke and the universe came into being. Heaven, sun, moon and stars, plants and animals, and last of all man, sprang to life in obedience to his word. Man was given dominion over every living thing. Significantly enough, according to verse 27, man and woman were created simultaneously — " male and female created He them." Their possibilities were limitless, for they were made in the image of God; which is to say that, even as God is perfect, so man can strive after perfection. This description of the beginning of the world is filled with assertions that God thought his creation good. And when the heavens and the seas and the earth, and all living things, and man and woman as the head of all, were completed, God again pronounced judgment upon his work and called it " very good " (Gen. 1:31). Thus in six days was the universe created.

On the seventh day, the story says, God rested from his labors. Now of course God, who created by merely speaking, was not weary. But the men who edited this story, who put into it their idea of God, their belief in man and their hope of his noble mission, were interested in having

the people observe the Sabbath. So they said that the Sabbath was instituted by God at the very beginning of the world. Thus we learn that this chapter of the Bible was written very late, after 500 B.C.E., when the Torah was being completed. For the men who were most insistent on having Jews observe the Sabbath lived after the Babylonian exile. We know that their view of God and man coincided with that of the first chapter of the Torah.

Instead of having been written first, this first chapter of the Torah was written last. Instead of having been written by Moses, it was written more than nine hundred years after Moses. Instead of having been dictated by God, it was dictated by God-inspired men who sought to make their people appreciative of life, sensitive to its divine origin, aware of man's duty to become more and more like God; men who, finally, wanted their fellows to observe the Sabbath. Thus, in the light of new learning and research, the first chapter of Genesis becomes a great sermon whereby ancient thinkers hoped to teach their fellow men about the greatness of the one God and the opportunity of the human race, all of whom were children of the same pair, and for whom God has a great purpose.

Biblical Creation and Modern Science

Several generations ago, thoughtful men and women who believed that every letter of the Torah enshrined eternal truth were much disturbed when scientists like Charles Darwin and Thomas Huxley began to teach the theory of the evolution of all life — that animals and men were not suddenly created by the command of God, but slowly developed from simple forms to their present nature. This theory contradicts the first chapter of Genesis. A British prime minister, Gladstone, who was devoutly religious, attacked the theory of evolution and said that it was wrong and Genesis right.

For liberal religious Jews, this problem does not exist.

We recognize that the first chapter of Genesis was written by men who sought to teach noble views about man and God. Naturally they were not familiar with the science discovered in the nineteenth century, twenty-four hundred years after their death; they knew only the science of their day. It is interesting to observe that they considered the sun the biggest light in the heavens and the stars far smaller: " And God made the two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; and the stars " (Gen. 1:16). Today we know that the sun is a star — one of the smallest — and that there are many stars far greater than it. Now if God had dictated the first chapter of Genesis to Moses this error would not have appeared, for God has always known the size of the stars and the sun. But *men* wrote it.

That they were learned men is evident. They had some idea of the gradations of life. First came vegetation, then fish, then fowl, then other animals, and finally man. Modern science too recognizes this order. But more than learned, these men were deeply religious. They wanted to teach that life is not an accident, because a wise God created it; that human beings can achieve perfection; that every man is a child of God; that every life has a purpose; and that God created the universe to enrich and ennoble man's life. They took the stories of creation that the common people knew and made them the vehicles for their hopes and ideals. Some scholars believe that the account in the first chapter of Genesis contains many elements of the creation story told in Babylonia. The Jewish leaders who edited the Torah came from Babylonia, and undoubtedly were influenced by Babylonian literature and science. But they clung to their own religious and ethical views. They used the literature of Babylon to state the religious views of Israel. Some scholars hold that the culture of Egypt and Assyria, like that of Babylon, influenced the editors of the Torah. Judaism thus becomes the work of great Jews with

the cooperation of great Egyptians, great Babylonians, great Assyrians, great Greeks, and so on.

What foolish statements some men have made because they believed that the first chapter of Genesis was actual history is to be seen from this experience of mine. Some years ago, while I sat in a dentist's chair, completely at his mercy, he asked me whether I believed in the theory of evolution as advanced by Charles Darwin. I answered that I accepted the general principles of Darwin's theory. Its details, however, had been revised and might again be revised. He turned on me and said: "If you believe that, then you cannot believe in the Bible, and you cannot be religious." He had me clamped so that I could not speak. But when his clamps were taken from my mouth it was my turn to ask a few questions. I said: "Do you know of any people who are religious, who have never read or even heard of the Bible?" He answered in the negative. I continued: "Have you ever heard of China and its hundreds of millions of people, most of whom are religious and have never read a word of our Bible?" I went on to mention the people of India, who are profoundly religious but know nothing about the Torah. I told him about people who were religious before Moses existed, or Jesus, before the Bible was written. He came to realize the folly of his first statement.

Surely if there were no Bible, and man were to go out in the midst of a rain and see the sun shining and a rainbow arching across the heavens, he would pray and worship the Creator of beauty. Whoever sees a bud bursting in the spring, or the petals of a flower unfold, knows that there is a God and is filled with a desire to worship him. If all the Bibles of the world were lost, religion would not disappear from the soul of men. There was religion before the Bible. There is religion among those who do not know the Bible. There is religion among those who believe in the Bible literally, and among those who believe in it in the light of modern learning.

The Second Creation Story

The first creation story ends with the statement that God rested on the seventh day. Then the Bible goes on:

These are the generations of the heaven and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made earth and heaven. No shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up; for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground; but there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. Then the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. And the Lord God planted a garden eastward, in Eden; and there He put the man whom He had formed. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

(Gen. 2:4–9)

Then follows the story of Adam and Eve, of their happiness in the garden of Eden, of their eating the forbidden fruit at the suggestion of the serpent, and of their exile and punishment. Reread the third chapter of Genesis. You will find a beautiful though tragic tale, filled with a sense of the suffering and sadness of life. Note especially these verses:

Unto the woman He said: 'I will greatly multiply thy pain and thy travail; in pain thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.' And unto Adam He said: 'Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying: Thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in toil shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life. Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out

of it wast thou taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.' (Gen. 3:16–19)

Here, in the second and third chapters of Genesis, is a second account of the creation. Apparently its author (or authors) knew nothing about the account in the first chapter. He says that there was no shrub, no herb, no rain, no man. But a mist went up and watered the earth. Water, it seems, was of great importance to this writer. Probably he had lived in the desert, where water was scarce. As soon as there was water, God made man out of dust and breathed life into his nostrils. Then God planted Eden and caused trees to grow. In the other creation story, God spoke and the world came into existence. Here God, like a sculptor, forms man out of dust. God is thought of as being much like man; he breathes and has hands. This is a very simple and primitive idea of God. In the first account, God created " male and female " simultaneously. Here Adam, the man, is made first, and Eve, the woman, is created later, and is definitely subordinate.

But these are perhaps minor contradictions. The most serious difference between the two creation stories is in the attitude that underlies them. In the first story, life is pronounced " very good." In the second story, we are told that women are to become mothers in pain and agony. Man is to dominate woman and she is to be subservient to him. Man's punishment is to labor. Now we regard motherhood as one of the greatest experiences of women, and labor as the crowning dignity of life. But not this author. The human race is to toil and suffer as a punishment for the sin of Adam and Eve. Obviously, this author was a pessimist. He may have lived in tragic times and had hard and difficult experiences, out of which he built a philosophy of life.

In the first chapters of the Torah, then, we have two accounts of creation, two ideas of God, two philosophies of life. The first account is more scientific and intellectual,

the second more poetic and emotional, though both are deeply religious. The first reveals an optimistic outlook, a majestic God, a glorious mission for the race. The second reflects a pessimistic philosophy, a primitive God, a sad destiny for man. Both accounts were put into the Torah by its editors. Thus it is clear that within Judaism many views of life and many interpretations of God were possible.

Most biblical scholars agree that the first chapter of the Torah was one of the last to be written, while the second account of creation preceded the first by many centuries. These two stories illustrate the fact that the Torah had many authors.

The Torah Narratives

The new view that the Torah is the work of many men over many centuries, who sought to convey their religious ideas by way of stories, has called forth interesting and meaningful interpretations of the biblical narratives. Let us look at the stories in Genesis in the light of these new discoveries.

Cain and Abel

Cain and Abel, the tales goes (Gen. 4:1–15), were the sons of Adam and Eve. "Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground." Notice that "but"; it suggests that the writer thought Abel, a shepherd, superior to Cain, a farmer. This prejudice in favor of the shepherd is shared by the god of the story, who was pleased with Abel's offering but ignored Cain's. Cain was hurt, deeply hurt, as is generally the case with victims of discrimination. So he turned upon the innocent Abel and slew him.

What is the significance of this episode? The key is to be found in the respective occupations of Cain and Abel. Cain, the farmer, is the villain; Abel, the shepherd, is the hero. The ancient Hebrew wanderers in the desert were shepherds and worshiped the desert god who was the pro-

tector of shepherds. The dwellers in Palestine were farmers and therefore had gods different from those of the shepherd nomads. The Hebrew tribes who moved into Palestine did an unusual thing, undoubtedly through Moses' influence: they took their desert god with them into the land of the farmers. This was a revolutionary step, for in ancient days it was generally believed that gods had authority only over a certain region and could not leave that region. The tribes that came to Palestine should have dropped their desert god, Yahveh, and accepted the Palestinian god, Baal. That they did not do so was a great advance in religion. It amounted to an assertion that a god who could be worshiped in the desert could also be worshiped in the valley of the Jordan.

The Canaanite was a tiller of the soil. He worshiped a god of the soil; indeed he worshiped three gods, a trinity — the father god of the heavens, the mother goddess of the earth, and the child god born of the divine pair. The shepherds from the desert did not like the religion of the Palestinian farmers. It was complex, and some of its aspects seemed vulgar and demoralizing. They could not accept the religion of the farmers, and hence their god rejected the offering of Cain, the tiller of the soil, and accepted that of Abel, the shepherd. This dramatic episode sums up the titanic conflict which took place among the Hebrews between the religion of the desert, given to the children of Israel through Moses, and the religion of the farmer in Palestine. The desert religion, championed by the prophets, won in the long run, and as a result of that victory Judaism was born — that Judaism from which Christianity and Mohammedanism have sprung.

The Flood

The story of Noah and the flood (Gen. 6–9) illustrates clearly how the Torah writers used ancient legends to teach eternal truths. They were anxious to make it plain that

there is a moral law of goodness, justice and love in the universe which men must obey, even as the sun in its rise and setting and the tides in their ebb and flow follow the laws of nature. Through the flood story they sought to teach that a wicked generation inevitably meets its doom, that ultimately God punishes evil, and that man can be saved from suffering only through obedience to God's will. Noah, the righteous, was saved, but the wicked of his generation were destroyed. At the close of the narrative, we are told that God set a rainbow in the sky to remind himself of his promise never again to destroy all mankind. These verses were added to teach that no matter what the sufferings of men for their wrongdoing, God's purpose is not to destroy them but to regenerate and correct them. In the darkest hours of history, the rainbow of hope appears as a reminder that God punishes men because he loves them and desires that they obey the moral law.

The Sacrifice of Isaac

One of the best known stories in Genesis tells of Abraham's attempt to sacrifice his son Isaac at God's command (Gen. 22:1–19). This episode is usually interpreted as an evidence of Abraham's great faith and obedience to the will of God as he knew it. But so to interpret the story is to read modern attitudes into it. As a matter of fact, at a certain period in the history of man it was a very common practice to sacrifice the first-born son. People believed that they owed their children to their god, and that therefore the god had a right to the first-born. Abraham was prepared to do what was almost universally done — to express his gratitude to the deity who had blessed him with a son by giving that son as an offering to the deity. But the writers of the Torah regarded child sacrifice as primitive and cruel. They sought to abolish it, and for that purpose invented or reshaped the story of Abraham and Isaac. As Abraham is about to sacrifice his son, an angel sent by God arrests his

hand. A ram miraculously appears in the bush, and a divine voice commands Abraham to spare his son and sacrifice the ram instead.

This narrative marks a turning point in the history of religion. If Abraham, at God's command, could substitute a ram for his son, then so could every other parent. Thus the writers of the Torah taught men to substitute animal for human sacrifice. The story reveals a change in Israel's religious practices as a result of the growth of ethical and religious ideals. Its value and meaning are altogether moral, not factual.

Jacob-Israel

Let us look next at the story of Esau and Jacob (Gen. 27). They were the twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah, but Esau was considered the first-born, since his birth had preceded that of his brother by a few minutes. Esau was the hunter, Jacob the thinker. "Jacob" means "deceiver," and that is what Jacob was. He deceived his brother when he tricked him into selling his birthright for a mess of pottage. With his mother's aid he deceived his aged and blind father and secured for himself the blessing intended for Esau, the first-born. He had to flee in disgrace for fear of Esau's wrath. In the middle of the night, like the thief that he was, Jacob ran away from his father's house. He went to live with Laban, his uncle, and eventually married Laban's two daughters, Leah and Rachel. Laban cheated Jacob and Jacob cheated Laban.

On the whole, Jacob is an unsavory character. I would not brag about him as my ancestor. I would consider him a family skeleton, to be hidden in the darkest closet. Why then did the men who wrote the Torah give him such an honored position? Because they had a purpose. They included the stories about Jacob to demonstrate that a sinner, an evildoer, can mend his ways, can even become the founder of a people great in religion.

" And Jacob was left alone, and there wrestled a man with him until the break of day." The man or mysterious stranger who wrestled with Jacob strained Jacob's thigh (wherefore to this day some Jews do not eat the corresponding part of cattle), but though Jacob was injured he held his own. As the dawn appeared, the stranger became frantic and pleaded with Jacob to release him. Why could the stranger not remain with Jacob? He was a spirit, and spirits may wander about, according to ancient beliefs, only at night; at daybreak they must disappear. (In Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* the ghost must " hie to his confine " at cockcrow, which heralds the dawn.) Jacob said he would release the spirit only if he would bless him. And the stranger blessed him in what seems to us peculiar fashion: " And he said unto him: ' What is thy name? ' And he said: ' Jacob.' And he said: ' Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel.' "

What a strange blessing, changing his name from Jacob to Israel — from " Deceiver " to " Champion of God "! But in ancient times a change of name was not unimportant; it meant a change of character, of personality. Even today that belief is cherished. When a non-Jew becomes a Jew, he is given a Jewish name. When a child is baptized and joins a church he is given a Christian name. So when Jacob's name was changed by the mysterious spirit, it meant that Jacob's character was changed. He no longer was a deceiver; he was now a champion of God.

This story shows also that a deceiver-hero like Jacob was no longer palatable to a people which had made advances in religion. Many primitive peoples idolized the trickster — provided he practiced his trickery on other tribes. Thievery was considered evil only if committed against members of one's own tribe; when committed against members of other groups, it was a virtue. Jacob stole from Esau, the head of another tribe. That is why he became a tribal hero. The Bible writers did not care for such heroes.

They changed Jacob's name to Israel because they no longer held to the philosophy which honored deceivers and tricksters. Thus in the light of the new approach to the Torah the Jacob story takes on deep significance.

Joseph

The tale of Joseph (Gen. 37–50) is one of the most dramatic in the Bible. Joseph was the favorite son of Jacob. He was a conceited and arrogant youth, wherefore his brothers hated him and sold him into slavery in Egypt. There he successfully interpreted Pharaoh's dreams and in recognition was made the prime minister of Egypt. During the years of plenty, he stored up surplus grain for the coming years of famine. When the lean years arrived, the whole adjacent world had to come to Egypt to purchase food. Among those who came were Joseph's brethren. Joseph revealed himself to them. They were fearful lest he take revenge, but he forgave them. His mercy was such that he explained to his brethren that God had induced them to sell him as a slave in order that he might save Egypt and them; their wicked plot against him was the will of God. Joseph repaid evil with good. The authors of this drama knew the words of Leviticus (45:18): "Thou shalt not take vengeance nor bear any grudge." Lest some think this law impracticable, the drama of Joseph was written. It demonstrated that men need not cherish grudges. One of the great heroes of Israel, who at first had been an unlovely character, vain and arrogant, practiced forgiveness, love and mercy toward his undeserving brethren.

With the Joseph drama the Book of Genesis, the first book of the Torah, comes to an end. Through its many narratives, it preaches and teaches the ideals which Judaism gave to the world. It is not a book of science or history, but a book which demonstrates the way of life that God intended for humanity. It is one of the noblest series of short stories in all literature. It is the finest introduction

to the history of a people ever written. It begins with one father and mother for all mankind. It continues with the assertion that justice and love are the law of the universe. It tells of the redemption possible for the wicked, and comes to an end with a demonstration of forgiveness, love and mercy.

I do not believe in the Book of Genesis as did my grandfather, who was a rabbi and a teacher of rabbis; I do not appreciate its significance any the less. I see it as the work of men, inspired and quickened by God, who took old tales and myths that had no moral and spiritual meaning and made them the vehicles by which humanity might be brought to worship the one God and to obey his commandments about just and righteous living.

The Real History of Israel

If the stories in Genesis and the other books of the Torah are not to be taken literally as history, then what is the history of the ancient Hebrews? Whence came they? Whence their religion? Whence their significance in human society? It must be admitted that it is not easy accurately to know events that occurred twenty or thirty centuries ago, when there were few records and archives, no newspapers, no magazines. There are accessible very few sources which can tell us about the ancient history of Israel. The best, of course, are the Torah and the rest of the Bible. But we must treat these just as we treat other antique literatures and apply to them the same standards as to other ancient writings. Yet, though the Bible cannot give us exact knowledge of historical events, it can give us a broad understanding of what happened in those far-off days. For the Bible is the record of the growth of a nation's soul. It mirrors the quest of a gifted people after knowledge of God.

The ancestors of the Hebrews were nomads who dwelt in the desert or in areas bordering the desert. Their religion was indistinguishable from that of other primitive

desert tribes. No one could have seen in it the germ out of which Judaism was to be created. What that desert religion was, we learn in part from the Bible, in part from other records and in part from studying the lives of primitive peoples. To desert people, water and the grass which grows in its vicinity are most precious. Their life depends on their ability to find wells. Gods who dwelt in wells, therefore, were widely worshiped, as were gods who dwelt in mountains, like Sinai and Horeb. Trees which furnish shade were a blessing, and hence there were sacred trees inhabited by gods. Chief among shepherds' gods were those who helped the flock increase; for the bigger the flock, the more secure the tribe considered itself. Invariably these gods were worshiped by sacrifices, human as well as animal.

The possessions of such desert wanderers were few. In antiquity, people who traveled about continuously could not carry much baggage. Shepherd tribes had to be on the move constantly to find pasture for their flocks. As beasts of burden they had only camels, horses, donkeys — and the women of the tribe. But they had no need for better transport, since they had little to carry. They had their sheep and cattle and whatever could be made out of them. Their houses were merely shelters from the sun, for there was neither rain nor snow in the desert. The skin of an animal stretched out on four poles served as the home of a nomad shepherd. He had no bed, but slept on the dry sand. Perhaps his wife had molded some cooking utensils and a few simple bowls out of clay. These were all his furniture. But in the desert, families usually lived together and shared all their property. The flocks of sheep and cattle constituted the wealth of the tribe. It owned no lands, no houses, no chariots. Whatever goods there were belonged to all. Since all were equally poor, there was the comradeship and fellowship of poverty. There were no idle rich and no "successful" class. The "successful" men were the best fighters, who were honored and became chiefs or leaders.

It is not difficult to understand that when this folk came to what seemed to them the rich country of Palestine, they were astonished and aghast at the fact that some people had more food than they needed while others were starving. In the desert all was owned and shared by all. Even the stranger who had nothing and appealed for help was admitted, for to deny him was to condemn him to death. The law of hospitality was binding in a shepherd civilization — the beginning, perhaps, of the ideal of charity. Where people were so poor and life was so hard, austere habits were imposed by circumstances. Simplicity and decency characterized most of the practices of the desert peoples.

Such was the environment in which the earliest Hebrew tribes moved. Occasionally they wandered into the neighborhood of the river valleys, where farmers dwelt and where life was less rigorous because food was more plentiful. Sometimes the desert nomads envied these dwellers in the fertile areas, who had fixed and permanent homes and lived lives of greater security and ease. Sometimes they thought of conquering them, and being courageous and not always wise they now and again invaded the lands of their more fortunate neighbors — in the Nile valley, the Jordan valley, the valley of the Tigris and the Euphrates. Usually they were unsuccessful; they were defeated and sold as slaves. Occasionally they were successful, but their successes rarely lasted long; the foe would reassemble his armies and drive them off. Nevertheless the men of the desert kept on hoping that some day their turn would come to live in a rich valley. They dreamed of a promised land of plenty, of tomorrow's tomorrow.

The Egyptian Episode

One group of tribes, a powerful and able group, once had the temerity to match weapons with the armies of the Pharaoh. The Egyptian monarch was fighting on several fronts, and hence the invaders easily defeated the small force

sent against them and established themselves on the outskirts of Egypt. But when Pharaoh had disposed of his other foes he subdued the interlopers and made them his slaves. The desert people loved freedom, and the yoke pressed upon them by the Egyptian tyrants galled them sorely. This love of liberty, a heritage of the desert, found its way into biblical literature. Any people that reads the Bible loves freedom. Enslaved by Egypt's rulers, the Hebrews longed for a deliverer.

Then Moses arose, one of the great personalities of history. He had been born a son of the oppressed Hebrews, but had been adopted and reared by a daughter of Pharaoh. When he grew to manhood however he remembered that he was a brother of the slaves whose anguished cries over impossible tasks rang out on the Egyptian countryside, and took up their cause. He risked all his royal privileges, his wealth and power to battle for their freedom. He was exiled and fled to the desert. There he married the daughter of a tribal chief who worshiped a god named Yahveh. This god, his father-in-law told Moses, not only brought increase to the flock but expected his worshipers to live justly and decently. Moses accepted Yahveh as his own god, and having heard his voice, as the Bible says, in a burning bush he was emboldened to return to Egypt, liberate the slaves and lead them back to the desert. He taught them to worship the desert god Yahveh, gave them a code of laws and promised them a new land where they would live in ease and freedom. These freed tribes wandered through the desert, were joined by other tribes to whom they considered themselves kin, and slowly invaded Palestine, where other Hebrew tribes had been making gradual inroads for centuries. How many tribes had been in Egypt, how many joined them in the desert, how many had already established themselves in Palestine, no one knows. That there were more than twelve the Bible proves.

But living in Palestine was not the perpetual picnic the

Hebrews had expected it to be. The Canaanites were fierce fighters and had excellent equipment. They were difficult to overcome. The difficulty was increased by the fact that the tribes were divided, quarreled among themselves and never cooperated for any long period. It was easy for their foes to conquer them one at a time as Hitler conquered Europe.

A few Hebrew leaders believed that if only the tribes could unite and form a nation, they could take over Palestine and so end most of their troubles. But to propagandize openly for union was hazardous, as there were many traitors who would report such agitation to the Philistine foe. Therefore secret patriotic fraternities were organized under the inspiration of a great genius, Samuel, who trained young men to spread the idea of forming one nation and organizing an effective army. These young agitators or prophets met with much opposition. The tribes had little in common except desert memories. They worshiped different gods and honored different heroes, and consequently could not easily find common ground. So Samuel's young men invented a slogan — " Out of many tribes One Nation, out of many gods One God, out of many histories One History." They were successful. They brought about a union of the tribes and created a nation. Saul became its first king and whipped the enemy. David succeeded him and made the nation secure. He established his own family as the royal family and handed an empire over to his son Solomon.

As we have said, the nation had to be united by something more positive than hostility to a common foe. It had to have a common ideal symbolized by one God, and a common past symbolized by a common history. But whose history was to be accepted? Whose heroes were to become the national heroes? Whose god was to become the national god? It was then that the gods of all the tribes were assembled, and the god of the most powerful tribe, the tribe of Judah, the tribe of the king, became the god of the nation.

That god was Yahveh or Adonoy, who had been introduced by Moses to a few Hebrew tribes.

What about a common history? The chief hero or heroes of each tribe were made national heroes, and skillful writers, drawing on old legends and on their own imagination, created a history which strengthened the fellow feeling of the tribes. Thus, if this thesis is correct, the three patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, were not kin to each other, but each was the hero of a different tribe. The compilers of the national literature made them grandfather, father and son in order to give the nation common ancestors. The same is true of the twelve sons of Jacob, whom the Bible presents as the founders of the twelve tribes. The fact is that each " son " was a tribal hero who had to be fitted into the national history.

The nation thus established did not endure long. After the death of King Solomon it broke into two parts, northern and southern. The northern kingdom was composed of tribes that were the older settlers and thus closer to Canaanitish life and farther removed from the desert tradition. The southern kingdom was composed of tribes that had more recently migrated from the desert. They were the more vigorous, and they remained independent longer. The northern kingdom lasted until 722 B.C.E., when it was crushed by the Syrians and its people disappeared from history. They were sold as slaves, abandoned the old worship and intermarried with other peoples. They are the " Lost Tribes of Israel." The southern kingdom was conquered by Babylon in 586 B.C.E., its temple was destroyed and many of its people were carried as captives to Babylon. But fifty years later Cyrus the Great of Persia conquered Babylon and allowed the Jewish exiles to return to their own country. Until the year 70 C.E. the Judean state maintained an independent or semi-independent existence. Then it was destroyed, and ever since the Jews have been scattered over the earth.

So far as Judaism is concerned, what happened in the kingdom of Judea from the days of David (1000 B.C.E.) until 70 C.E. is of great importance. How did these desert tribes create ethical religion, write a Bible, give to the world an Isaiah, a Micah, a Jeremiah, a Jesus, and inspire a Paul and a Mohammed?

The Prophets, the Creators of Judaism

In the preceding pages, I have tried to show the origins of the Hebrew tribes, whose religion, primitive, crude, even cruel, was hardly distinguishable from that of other desert nomads. Moses, a strong personality, had been a factor in emancipating a few of these tribes from Egypt and had induced them to accept as their god Yahveh of the desert, who dwelt on Mount Sinai. He even told them — what was revolutionary for the ancient world — that this desert god, whose dwelling place was on a mountain, had power outside the desert and could lead them in conquest of the fertile Jordan valley, where their hardships would be minimized. With Yahveh, Moses associated some rude ideas of justice which made him different from other gods.

This new kind of god, it must be remembered, was known only to the few tribes who came to Palestine around 1500 B.C.E. But these few tribes, the latest arrivals from the desert, had the strongest loyalties to its way of life. Unspoiled by the more comfortable habits of an agricultural civilization, they were more vigorous and powerful and hence exercised disproportionate influence in the newly organized nation. Before Samuel, there was no Hebrew nation; there were Hebrew tribes who had a common desert tradition and a common foe. Successfully to meet this foe and to wrest his land from him the tribes federated into a nation, and accepted as the national god Yahveh, the god of the strongest of the tribes.

The religion of the new nation, however, was not Judaism. It was still the primitive faith of the desert, plus a few

new tendencies, which slowly developed into a universal faith. The men who accomplished this gigantic task were the prophets of Israel, the greatest group of moral and religious teachers the human race has ever brought forth. There were only a few of these prophets and they struggled against tremendous odds. But they created the Bible and Judaism, the synagogue and the church, and the religious and ethical ideals of the best in modern civilization. Who were these prophets? Whence did they come? What and how did they achieve?

The average person thinks of a prophet as a predictor of events, a fortune-teller who knows the future and thus can guide and help individuals. Such prophets were not unknown in the Hebrew kingdom. Every king, just as he had a chief butler and a chief baker and a captain of the guard, had a court prophet whose business it was to tell him whether what he planned to do would prove successful or not. Such prophets held their position at the whim of the king. Sometimes they dominated the king or chief, but usually they held their position only as long as they pleased their employer or could maintain their own prestige. That is why what King David's prophet, Nathan, did is all the more remarkable.

Nathan

As often happens with successful men, King David's military victories gave him an overweening opinion of himself, and he came to believe that he could do anything he pleased. By chance he saw a very beautiful woman whom he wanted to marry, but she had a husband, Uriah the Hittite, a brave soldier and a veteran in David's army. To secure Bathsheba, the wife, David plotted Uriah's death. He ordered his general to station Uriah at the thickest point of the battle and there leave him to be slain by the foe. David's commands were carried out and Uriah was slain fighting for the king who had betrayed him. Then David married Bath-

sheba, who later became the mother of Solomon. What David did other ancient and even modern monarchs have also done. How David acquired Bath-sheba might be forgotten by history, except that —

> . . . the thing that David had done displeased the Lord [God]. And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him and said unto him: ' There were two men in one city: the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and reared; and it grew up together with him, and with his children; and it did eat of his own morsel, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him, but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.' And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan: ' As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this deserveth to die; and he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.' And Nathan said to David: ' Thou art the man.'
>
> (II Sam. 11:27–12:6)

This is one of the most beautiful short stories in all literature, but its place in the history of religion is even more important. When Nathan, the court prophet, turned to the king, his employer who had the power of life and death over him, and told him, " Thou art the man — thou art guilty of this contemptible, cowardly crime," he gave voice to a new conception of the prophet's function. He implied that the prophet's duty was not merely to be a yes-man to the king and uphold whatever he did, or to predict the future more or less luckily, but to be a critic of the king, to accuse him when he was guilty and speak to him in the name of God, who desired justice and righteousness. Thereafter the prophets became moral teachers, who accused the people as Nathan had accused the king and like Nathan risked

their lives to obey what they believed to be the commands of God. " Prophet " in Hebrew is *nabi,* meaning " to speak forth "; the prophet courageously speaks forth the truths of God. Thus Nathan founded a dynasty greater than David's, a dynasty of moral teachers who have inspired and exalted humanity.

Nathan's example was followed by his popular successor, Elijah. Elijah too was a spokesman of Yahveh, the desert god, and the opponent of Baal, the god of the agricultural religion. The biblical account of Elijah makes plain the conflict between the religion of the shepherds from the desert and that of the Palestinian farmers. Through his opposition to the king, Elijah encountered many hardships. He was forced to go into hiding and to live a lonely life. Together with his follower Elisha he paved the way for the literary prophets. While their spirit indicates that they belong in the prophetic tradition, Nathan, Elijah and Elisha are not numbered among the prophets of Israel because no record of their sermons has come down to us. Perhaps they wrote down their teachings, but the writings have been lost. When a modern Jew speaks of the prophets of Israel he means the fifteen who are listed in the Bible, whose teachings are preserved in writings prepared by them or by their pupils.

How Were Prophets Made?

But, you may ask, how did these men happen to become prophets? Why would anyone choose so difficult and dangerous a career? They did not choose. They were inspired men. They spoke the truth that welled up in their hearts and would not be ignored, however they struggled against it. They heard God's voice and obeyed its summons. God communicated with them, filled their souls with his truths, and they proclaimed his message to their fellow men. Isaiah has left us a record of the experience which changed his life and made him a prophet:

In the year that king Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne high and lifted up, and His train filled the temple. Above Him stood the seraphim. . . . And one called unto another, and said:

Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
The whole earth is full of His glory.

And the posts of the door were moved at the voice of them that called, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I:

Woe is me! for I am undone;
Because I am a man of unclean lips,
And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;
For mine eyes have seen the King,
The Lord of hosts.

Then flew unto me one of the seraphim, with a glowing stone in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; and he touched my mouth with it, and said:

Lo, this hath touched thy lips;
And thine iniquity is taken away,
And thy sin expiated.

And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying:

Whom shall I send,
And who will go for us?

Then I said: 'Here am I; send me.' (Isa. 6:1–8)

Amos tells us how the priest Amaziah bade him depart from Beth-el and preach in Judah, his own country.

Then answered Amos: 'I was no prophet, neither was I a prophet's son; but I was a herdsman, and a dresser of sycomore-trees; and the Lord took me from following the flock, and the Lord said unto me: Go, prophesy unto My people Israel.'
(Amos 7:14–15)

Today the prophets are honored, but in their own day they were hated, persecuted, imprisoned and even killed. Speaking of himself, Amos says, "They hate him that reproacheth in the gate, and they abhor him that speaketh uprightly." Jeremiah complains that because he taught the word of God,

I am become a laughing-stock all the day,
Every one mocketh me.
. . . the word of the Lord is made
A reproach unto me, and a derision, all the day.
(Jer. 20:7–8)

So deeply did this sensitive man suffer from the taunts of his fellows that he cried out in despair:

Cursed be the day
Wherein I was born; . . .
Wherefore came I forth out of the womb
To see labor and sorrow,
That my days should be consumed in shame?
(Jer. 20: 14, 18)

But Jeremiah could not desert a noble cause nor ignore the insistent demand of his God that he speak:

And if I say, ' I will not make mention of Him,
Nor speak any more in His name,'
Then there is in my heart as it were a burning fire
Shut up in my bones,
And I weary myself to hold it in,
But cannot. (Jer. 20:9)

Thus the prophet takes up his task because he is compelled by the might and majesty of God. He is a tool of God. Many a disheartened preacher in church or synagogue has found in the example of the prophets of Israel fresh courage to go on with an unpopular or seemingly hopeless cause.

The prophets changed the course of Hebrew history. They created the Jew and Judaism and all the influences that stemmed from these. Before the prophets, Hebrew religion was primitive and crude. Let us call it Semitism, the religion of the desert Semites, slightly touched by the spirit of Moses. After the prophets, Semitism began to make way for Judaism. The prophetic teachings clashed with Semi-

tism and the conflict continued for centuries until Semitism vanished and Judaism took its place. That conflict is being re-enacted on the stage of history today. But today men who call themselves anti-Semites seek to destroy Judaism, which was and is opposed to Semitism. Significantly enough, modern anti-Semites revert to the primitive religion of Semitism, with its tribal and national god and its belief that might makes right and that the powerful should bully the weak. In their emphasis on brutality, they are trying to restore the Semitism which Judaism vanquished among the ancient Hebrews.

The Bible lists fifteen prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi. As a matter of fact there were more. The Book of Isaiah for example contains the teachings of at least two men. Nor were all the prophets of equal importance. In the pages that follow I shall outline the teachings of those who in my opinion were the most significant — the two Isaiahs, Jeremiah, Amos, Hosea, Micah, and Jonah.

Amos of Tekoa

If a rabbi were to stand in his pulpit today and declare that God would rather have men practice justice than observe ceremonies, and help the poor than sing hymns, the overwhelming majority of his hearers would be in complete agreement with him. But twenty-seven hundred years ago such a declaration would have been met first with astonishment, then with anger. It contradicted the fundamentals of religion as then understood. In the eighth century B.C.E., when Amos, the shepherd of Tekoa, appeared at Beth-el and began to proclaim the message of God, men believed in many gods, to whom they sacrificed the best of their sheep and cattle and fruits of the field. The gods in turn were counted upon to favor the worshipers according to the generosity of their offerings. No matter what a man

did — whether he was kind or cruel, generous or greedy, just or unjust — the gods did not care. You might murder and steal, but if you sacrificed a lamb to your god he would grant you good fortune. Such was religion all over the world.

But Amos the shepherd, as he led his flock from oasis to oasis and scanned the brilliant heavens at night, must have come to believe that the god he worshiped — the God who created the stars and upheld the firmament — was great of spirit. His God was Yahveh of the desert — the desert where life was simple and poor, where no man starved so long as the tribe owned even one sheep, where none had more than his neighbor. He could not believe that those who came in their fashionable attire to Beth-el, the royal shrine, to sacrifice their sheep and cattle could win the favor of Yahveh. When Amos marched through the sacred city and saw the hungry and the destitute, the widows cheated and the orphans unprovided for; when he saw the luxurious palaces of the rich, their ivory couches and extravagant parties; when he saw that the powerful and affluent, who did not care for their fellow men, thought that they could win the god's favor by giving him a fat sheep, his anger knew no bounds. Then the voice of God spoke to him, and he uttered words that will never be forgotten:

I hate, I despise your feasts,
And I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies.
Yea, though ye offer me burnt-offerings and your meal-offerings,
I will not accept them;
Neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts.
Take thou away from Me the noise of thy songs;
And let Me not hear the melody of thy psalteries.
But let justice well up as waters,
And righteousness as a mighty stream. (Amos 5: 21–24)

Those who heard Amos were not aware that they were witnessing the birth of the greatest religious movement in history. They were shocked and angry at this mad shep-

herd, this uncouth country man with no manners and no standing, who dared on their holy day to mock their ritual and defy their god. There were probably those who called him a radical agitator or a tactless teacher or a dangerous revolutionary. Some may have suggested imprisoning or even " liquidating " him. But Amos could not be stopped by hatred and threats. He could not keep the words of God within him.

Amos taught not only that conduct counts, that God desires men to be good. He had another great message: that God cares not merely for one nation or one people, but for all.

> Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto Me,
> O children of Israel? saith the Lord.
> Have not I brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt,
> And the Philistines from Caphtor,
> And Aram from Kir? (Amos 9:7)

Amos was saying that God is a universal God, the ruler of all peoples and nations. He freed Israel from Egypt, but he freed the Philistines, Israel's chief enemies, from Caphtor. God is not tribal or clannish; he cares for all humanity. This again was hard to understand in that day when gods were believed to be many and to have power only over limited territories.

All around Amos people were saying that the day of God was coming. They meant that their god would triumph over all their foes and their ambitions would be realized. But Amos knew that the day of God would be the triumph of justice, when the wicked must pay the penalty for their injustice and cruelty. Because his own people were wicked they would meet their doom on the day of God:

> Therefore, because ye trample upon the poor,
> And take from him exactions of wheat;
> Ye have built houses of hewn stone,
> But ye shall not dwell in them,

Ye have planted pleasant vineyards,
But ye shall not drink the wine thereof.
For I know how manifold are your transgressions,
And how mighty are your sins;
Ye that afflict the just,
And that turn aside the needy in the gate. . . .
Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord!
Wherefore would ye have the day of the Lord?
It is darkness, and not light. . . .
And it shall come to pass in that day,
Saith the Lord God,
That I will cause the sun to go down at noon, . . .
And I will turn your feasts into mourning,
And all your songs into lamentation;
And I will bring up sackcloth upon all loins, . . .
And I will make it as mourning for an only son,
And the end thereof a bitter day.

(Amos 5:11–12, 18; 8:9–10)

Such was the message of gloom and doom that the prophet brought. Should he have brought a message of cheer? If he had, he would have failed. But by speaking the truth that God put into his heart he blazed a new trail in religion. By his teaching that God is worshiped by righteousness and not by ritual, that he is the God of all peoples, that those who disobey God's laws will be destroyed, he laid the foundations of Judaism.

Hosea, the Prophet of God's Love

For many centuries, leaders of Christendom have taught that the idea of the love of God is the singular contribution of Christianity to religion. Judaism, they said, taught the justice of God, and justice was stern and harsh. Thus they felt that Judaism was inadequate. A young church, anxious to aggrandize itself, believed that it had to detract from the significance of the synagogue, its own mother. Recently at a meeting which sought to promote good will between Jews and Christians a pious Christian lady asserted

that too much could not be expected of the Jews since they worship the limited God of the Old Testament. As a matter of fact there are many different conceptions of God in the Old Testament, but in a spirit of fanatical partisanship this lady was comparing the best in the Christian tradition with the worst in the Jewish. How unjust her attitude was became clear to her when a few verses of the Old Testament were brought to her attention, and especially when the prophet Hosea was recalled to her.

Similarly, the prophet Amos is often condemned because of his harsh judgment upon his people. Amos, it is said, should not have doomed Israel utterly; he should have been merciful as well as just. This criticism is both fair and unfair — fair because Amos' religion was too stern, unfair because Amos did not complete Judaism. He was one of its builders. He did much for the new faith, but he did not speak the last word.

As if sensing the inadequacy of religion as defined by Amos, Hosea came to enlarge it. He accepted Amos' view that God desired righteousness more than sacrifice, and as he looked upon the unrighteousness that prevailed he too was certain that Israel must be destroyed. But then something happened to him — a soul-racking experience out of which he made a magnificent contribution to the growing religion.

Hosea was married. His wife bore him three children, and their names suggest that their father cherished no hope for Israel. But Hosea was taught by life. His wife, whom he loved dearly, was faithless and left him. According to the law of the time Hosea had a right to inflict death on her. This he determined to do. But he found that he could not because despite her conduct he still loved her. So he purchased her freedom, brought her home, forgave her and hoped that his love would redeem her character.

This experience made a tremendous impression on Hosea and through him on Judaism. If he, a human being, could

not kill the one he loved, what about God? God had loved Israel. He had brought her out of Egypt; he had guarded her tenderly as a lover guards his beloved. Israel had been faithless. She deserved destruction. But God loved her and he would not destroy that which he loved. Said God through the prophet:

> How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?
> How shall I surrender thee, Israel? . . .
> My heart is turned within Me,
> My compassions are kindled together.
> I will not execute the fierceness of Mine anger, . . .
> For I am God, and not man,
> The Holy One in the midst of thee,
> And I will not come in fury. (Hos. 11:8–9)

Hosea meant not that there should be no punishment, but that justice should be tempered with love and mercy.

> Samaria shall bear her guilt,
> For she hath rebelled against her God;
> They shall fall by the sword;
> Their infants shall be dashed in pieces,
> And their women with child shall be ripped up.
> Return, O Israel, unto the Lord thy God;
> For thou hast stumbled in thine iniquity.
> Take with you words,
> And return unto the Lord;
> Say unto Him: 'Forgive all iniquity,
> And accept that which is good;
> So will we render for bullocks the offering of our lips. . . .
> For in Thee the fatherless findeth mercy.'
> I will heal their backsliding,
> I will love them freely;
> For Mine anger is turned away from him. (Hos. 14:1–5)

God forgives — this was Hosea's message. He is not revengeful, but punishes the wrongdoing of his children in order that they may return to him. Incidentally, Hosea anticipated the most modern attitude toward the criminal,

which demands that prisons become schools and hospitals where, through love and disciplined kindness, wayward human beings are re-educated and their hurts are healed. Hosea's view of God brings hope to humanity today. It declares that no one is hopelessly bad, that no life is utterly ruined; that no matter what a man has done, God still cares and is anxious that he repent and return to him. The blackest sinner will be forgiven for the worst crime and made whole by the God of love. When Hosea is finished with his ministry, Judaism has become a larger and tenderer religion, and its God is the God of mercy and forgiveness as well as of justice.

The First Isaiah, the Prophet of Faith and Peace

The very large book of the Bible which is known as the Book of Isaiah contains the work of at least two men. That this is so is easily proved. The First Isaiah began to prophesy in the year when King Uzziah died, about 738 B.C.E. The fortieth chapter of the Book of Isaiah contains the words of comfort spoken by a prophet to a people who were lamenting the destruction of Jerusalem. Now Jerusalem was not destroyed until 586 B.C.E., a hundred and fifty-odd years after the death of Uzziah.

The First Isaiah lived in critical times. Great empires were struggling for supremacy and little states were being trampled upon by the dictators' legions. Every little state was tempted to make an alliance with some powerful empire, to avoid being gobbled up by it. Samaria, the northern kingdom, was so tempted and fell. But Isaiah was opposed to any military alliance because he had no faith in force. He counseled Israel to put its trust in God. "With us is God" (*Emanuel* in Hebrew), he shouted as he sought to bolster the morale of the panic-stricken people. But what comfort could he give his people in this most tragic of times, when brute force and tyranny were in the saddle, when booted Caesars rode roughshod over the earth and

men were tempted to ask whether justice and love were indeed the laws of the universe, whether there was indeed a God who desired righteousness and punished evil? It is a question that has been asked in other ages and is not unknown today.

First of all, like his predecessors, Isaiah was convinced that a people who had sinned must be punished:

[God] looked for justice, but behold violence;
For righteousness, but behold a cry.
Woe unto them that join house to house,
That lay field to field, . . .
That justify the wicked for a reward,
And take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!
Therefore as the tongue of fire devoureth the stubble,
And as the chaff is consumed in the flame,
So their root shall be as rottenness,
And their blossom shall go up as dust;
Because they have rejected the law of the Lord of hosts,
And contemned the word of the Holy One of Israel. . . .
'The spoil of the poor is in your houses;
What mean ye that ye crush My people,
And grind the face of the poor?'
Saith the Lord, the God of hosts.

(Isa. 5:7–8, 23–24; 3:14–15)

The prophet saw clearly that Judea and Israel would be crushed. But the conquerors, he declared, were but God's instruments, his rod to chastise those who had disobeyed the divine laws. Yet whatever calamity might come, Isaiah's faith was unshaken and his confidence strong in the ultimate redemption not only of Judea and Israel but of all mankind. He expressed his faith in the picture of a golden day to be ushered in by a majestic personality, the ideal ruler:

And there shall come forth a shoot out of the stock of Jesse, . . .
And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him,
The spirit of wisdom and understanding,
The spirit of counsel and might,

The spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord. . . .
And he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes,
Neither decide after the hearing of his ears;
But with righteousness shall he judge the poor,
And decide with equity for the meek of the land;
And he shall smite the land with the rod of his mouth,
And with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.
And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins,
And faithfulness the girdle of his reins.
And the wolf shall dwell with the lamb,
And the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
And the calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
And a little child shall lead them. . . .
They shall not hurt or destroy
In all My holy mountain;
For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord,
As the waters cover the sea. (Isa. 11:1–9)

And lest any think that this ideal was meant to apply only to Israel, Isaiah reiterated his faith in peace and justice for all mankind in words that are quoted wherever human beings dream of harmony among nations:

And it shall come to pass in the end of days,
That the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established as the top of the mountains,
And shall be exalted above the hills;
And all nations shall flow in unto it.
And many peoples shall go and say,
'Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, . . .
And He will teach us of His ways,
And we will walk in His paths.'
For out of Zion shall go forth the law,
And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
And He shall judge between the nations,
And shall decide for many peoples;
And they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
And their spears into pruning-hooks;
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war any more. (Isa. 2:2–4)

Thus Isaiah's message was one of hope and of the faith inseparable from it. Like Amos, he preached the justice of God. Like Hosea, he preached the love of God. But his singular contribution to Judaism was his emphasis on hope. Whatever calamity befell the race of men, however the wicked might seem to triumph, at long last the golden day of the Lord would come and mankind would enter upon the glorious and happy destiny decreed for it by God. These three great prophets together shaped Judaism and laid the foundations of the Eternal Synagogue.

Micah and His Definition of Religion

The prophet Micah lived at about the same time as Isaiah. He too pleaded the cause of the poor and proclaimed that punishment would come upon the whole nation because of the inequalities existing in it. But he is remembered above all for his superb definition of religion, a definition not surpassed in any literature of the world:

It hath been told thee, O man, what is good,
And what the Lord doth require of thee:
Only to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God. (Mic. 6:8)

This, according to Micah, was Judaism.

Micah repeats, in the identical language of that prophet, Isaiah's vision of the unity of mankind and the establishment of peace, but to Isaiah's words that they "shall beat their swords into plowshares" and shall learn war no more he adds a statement of great significance and profound wisdom:

But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree,
And none shall make them afraid. (Mic. 4:4)

Micah here reveals his understanding of the basic causes of war; namely, the insecurity and fear that spring from hunger, hopelessness and other social and psychological ills.

He knew that injustice breeds war, that men can be freed from this scourge only through justice. The vine of which he speaks is the symbol of plenty, and the fig tree of shelter from the elements. He was saying that sufficient food and a home for every man and his children are the prerequisite to peace, for men who are thus satisfied will be immune to agitation for war. The price of world peace is world justice. Ancient wisdom, and yet how modern!

The Deuteronomic Reformation

Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Micah all attacked the popular religion of a national god who advanced the interests of one nation and demanded worship through sacrifice. But their eloquent appeals and powerful personalities were not sufficient to transform a whole people overnight. Most of the people resented them, but there was a minority who appreciated them and recorded and preserved their words. In time that minority organized itself into a party through whose growing numbers and influence the prophets' ideals began to affect the masses. The prophetic party demanded reforms. It met with much opposition, and its members were persecuted and many were martyred. All progress, including religious progress, has had to be bought with the readiness of courageous spirits to give their all for it. But the party succeeded in pushing through some of its demands.

This was achieved in the Deuteronomic Reformation, so called because its provisions are recorded largely in the Book of Deuteronomy, the fifth book of the Torah. The code of Deuteronomy had been written by prophetic teachers, but suppressed. The reign of King Josiah, a kind and righteous ruler, was deemed opportune to press for its acceptance. In 621 B.C.E., the Book of Deuteronomy was "found" in the temple by Hilkiah, the high priest. Hilkiah told Shaphan, King Josiah's scribe, of his discovery, and Shaphan informed the king. "And it came to pass,

when the king had heard the words of the book of the law, that he rent his clothes" (II Kings 22). Josiah immediately ordered the destruction of all idols and made the deuteronomic code the law of the land. A people threatened by a Scythian invasion was prepared for reforms. The code was read in public and king and people solemnly agreed to abide by it. Thus was the stage set for the deuteronomic reform.

Deuteronomy ascribes all its laws to Moses, who is said to have received them directly from God. In making this ascription, the authors or promulgators of Deuteronomy justified themselves on the ground either that an old Mosaic code inspired their work or that it was customary to append the name of a great hero or famous man to a book in order to gain a hearing for it.

The religion of the prophets emphasized the oneness of God, his moral nature and the justice and love of his rule. The first code of laws written under the influence of the prophets' disciples was concerned with ways and means of making that religion dominant among the people, especially its view of God as one. They wrote into Deuteronomy the most popular sentence in Judaism, a sentence recited by many a Jewish martyr as he died and even now repeated by children and adults in their daily prayers: "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one" (Deut. 6:4). The cry of the new nation had been, "One nation, one history, one God." The cry of the prophets was, "One God, one humanity, one justice and love for all." But it was not easy to uproot the worship of many gods. Even when convinced in their minds that there was but one God, people clung emotionally to the gods of their childhood days, taught them by parent or priest. It has never been easy to wean men away from their religious loyalties.

A drastic step had to be taken, and the reformers did not hesitate. They insisted that there must be only one altar, one sanctuary, one temple where the one God could be wor-

shiped. Nowhere else could men sacrifice to or commune with him. Why this rule was essential is not difficult to understand. People believed that wherever they erected an altar, there a different god dwelt. The prophetic party realized that the only way to break these deeply rooted polytheistic habits was to destroy all altars except the one at Jerusalem. So the decree went forth in King Josiah's reign that all altars outside of Jerusalem must be destroyed. This was done. Jerusalem became not merely the nation's capital, the seat of government and the residence of the king; it became also the holy city, whither the faithful journeyed at least three times a year, on the major holy days, to worship their God and place their offerings on his only altar. The one temple was a teaching device to further belief in one God.

In later years, the Jews who dwelt outside of Palestine did not call the place where they gathered to worship a temple. They called it a house of assembly — a "synagogue" — or a house of prayer or study. And when the temple was in ruins they cherished the hope that it would be rebuilt and that the priests would again offer the prescribed sacrifices on its altar. But today many Jews believe that the need for one temple which existed twenty-five hundred years ago has long since passed. They worship in many places, but they all worship the same God. I am rabbi of Temple Israel, a Jewish congregation which deliberately has taken to itself the name of the old sanctuary at Jerusalem. We do not believe that there is need for the re-establishment of one sole temple.

But though the prophetic party took heroic measures to establish faith in the one God, they kept the sacrificial system which the prophets had likewise condemned. Why was this? The prophets condemned animal sacrifice because people thought it was all they needed to do in the way of worship. They would give their offering of sheep or cattle

to the priests and then, confident that they had won God's favor, would proceed to rob the poor, pervert justice, wage war and do all manner of wickedness. Nevertheless the reformers did not abolish animal sacrifice. It may be that they felt they must move slowly, that to forbid sacrifice entirely would be to destroy religion for the idolatrous and superstition-steeped masses, who were far from ready to accept the universal God who is worshiped chiefly through decent living. We know today that God is to be worshiped through prayer and the righteous life, and we do not desire the restoration of the old sacrificial cult. In orthodox synagogues cult prayers remain. In Reform Judaism they have been completely eliminated.

Because they taught that God is concerned with all of life, the deuteronomic reformers had to demonstrate what they meant. Hence the laws of Deuteronomy range over the whole life of man. They deal with religious ceremonials; with food, health and the prevention and cure of disease; with debts and interest and honest weights and measures; with war, murder, cities of refuge for wrongdoers and individual responsibility for crime; with judges, prophets and kings; with disobedient sons, the treatment of brides, marriage and divorce; with slavery; with justice for foreigners, widows and orphans; with humane treatment of animals; with philanthropy — in short, with all of life. Everywhere it is evident that the framers of the deuteronomic code based their commands on the highest principles. As a great Christian scholar has said, " Justice and love, equity and humanity distinguish this code of laws."

Thus the religion of the prophets was recognized in a definite body of laws that was destined to live for centuries, and Judaism became a religion of law and a religion of the book. Men were told to study this book so that they might know the word of God. To obey his word brought blessing; to disobey it, the curse of destruction.

For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not too hard for thee, neither is it far off. It is not in heaven. . . . Neither is it beyond the sea. . . . But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it . . . for that is thy life, and the length of thy days; that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

(Deut. 30:11–20)

Jeremiah, the Prophet of Inward Religion

No prophet's life is more heroic and appealing than Jeremiah's. Born of an aristocratic priestly family and like Moses untouched in his youth by the suffering and sorrow of the common man, Jeremiah heard the call of God and his sensitive soul responded to the summons. He describes the experience which led him to embark on his ministry:

And the word of the Lord came unto me, saying:
Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee,
And before thou camest forth out of the womb I sanctified thee;
I have appointed thee a prophet unto the nations.

Then said I: 'Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak; for I am a child.' But the Lord God said unto me:

Say not: I am a child;
For to whomsoever I shall send thee thou shalt go,
And whatsoever I shall command thee thou shalt speak.
Be not afraid of them;
For I am with thee to deliver thee. . . .

Then the Lord put forth His hand, and touched my mouth; and the Lord said unto me:
Behold, I have put My words in thy mouth;
See, I have this day set thee over the nations and over the kingdoms,
To root out and to pull down, . . .
To build, and to plant. (Jer. 1:4–10)

Jeremiah lived and was active in the days when King Josiah instituted the Deuteronomic Reformation. Very likely the prophet approved of the reforms. But what God

desired more than legal reform was inner reform — a revolution of the heart, the complete faithfulness and dedication of the soul. Of this inward change Jeremiah saw no evidence, and without it the legal reforms seemed sterile to him. The one temple where alone worship could be conducted was the symbol of the new program. There Jeremiah saw external ritual, but no inner religion. Finally he spoke forth in impassioned words what was in his heart and soul:

> . . . Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel:
> Amend your ways and your doings, and I will cause you to dwell in this place. Trust ye not in lying words, saying: ' The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these.' Nay, but if ye . . . thoroughly execute justice between a man and his neighbor; if ye oppress not the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to your hurt; then will I cause ye to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, for ever and ever. . . . Will ye steal, murder, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and offer unto Baal, and walk after other gods whom ye have not known, and come and stand before Me in this house, whereupon My name is called, and say: ' We are delivered,' that ye may do all these abominations? Is this house, whereupon My name is called, become a den of robbers in your eyes? . . . I will cast you out of My sight, as I have cast out all your brethren. (Jer. 7:3–15)

This address, known as the Temple Sermon because it was delivered at the temple gates, startled and infuriated the nation. It was treason and blasphemy, for it mocked the sacred law and scorned the holy of holies. Jeremiah had to flee for his life and go into hiding, but even then he was concerned to have his teaching go on, and so he dictated his messages to his faithful secretary Baruch.

But Jeremiah was a pupil of Hosea as well as of Amos. He knew that evil must be punished, but he knew also that God's punishment was not vengeful but regenerative. He

was certain that despite the destruction which he foresaw — and he lived to utter his lamentations amid the ruins of Jerusalem — there was to be a glorious future for the people of Judea.

> Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel . . . ; not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. . . . But . . . I will put My law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people; and they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, . . . saying: ' Know the Lord '; for they shall all know Me, from the least of them unto the greatest, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more. (Jer. 31:31–34)

Jeremiah needed no external religion. His communion with God was so direct and real that he assumed that all men were capable of a similar experience. He needed no sacrificial cult, no temple, no mediating priesthood to make him aware of God's existence. To the first captives carried to Babylon, he wrote a letter urging them to purify themselves spiritually, for God could be worshiped in Babylon as well as in Judea:

> And ye shall call upon Me, and go, and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart. And I will be found of you, saith the Lord. (Jer. 29:12–14)

This is Jeremiah's statement of his faith that God can be found without external assistance by the human heart which is properly attuned.

Jeremiah's prophecies show an acute awareness of the unity of ethics and religion. From his consciousness of God came his ethical concern. He taught that the ethical life is God's choicest praise. In communion with God he found courage to carry on a mission that seemed hopeless.

His deep faith made him the champion of the dispossessed. Wrongdoing alienates man from God; righteous living unites him with God.

Christians say that Jeremiah, the prophet of inward religion, is the prophet closest to Jesus. They discern in his new covenant of the spirit an insight akin to that of the New Testament. To Jews it is clear that Jeremiah built into Judaism a new element of imperishable beauty. His faith was not a tradition defined by the past, nor a creed enunciated by theologians, nor a set of rites taught by priests. It was the fruit of his own inner struggle. He faltered, he doubted, and out of the travail of his soul he came to an unshakable trust in God. To him religion was a meeting and speaking with God. Beyond his suffering and anguish, beyond the violence and cruelty of his age, he saw God and there found peace and hope eternal.

The Babylonian Exile

Jeremiah's predictions of doom were fulfilled. An upstart empire, under the leadership of a vigorous ruler, the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar, invaded Judea in 586 B.C.E., destroyed its cities, captured Jerusalem and leveled the temple. Having the country in his power, Nebuchadnezzar determined to make impossible a national revival in its boundaries. As he withdrew his armies, he took with him to Babylon the leaders of Judea, its ablest and wisest men, and left behind a demoralized remnant, too ignorant to conspire against his rule and too weak to threaten his power.

But Jeremiah proved to be right in another respect. Judea's loss of freedom bore precious fruit for religion and important developments took place in the land of the captivity. The chief problem of the prophets had been how to make the people truly religious, to lead them to see that not ritual but righteousness, not sacrifice but sacrificial living, was the best way of worshiping God. Now in Babylon

new problems arose. How was it possible to worship God when his temple was destroyed? How could sacrifices be offered to him when his altar was demolished? An unknown poet expressed the emotions of the captives in a magnificent psalm:

By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept,
When we remembered Zion.
Upon the willows in the midst thereof
We hanged up our harps.
For there they that led us captive asked of us words of song,
And our tormentors asked of us mirth:
'Sing us one of the songs of Zion.'

How shall we sing the Lord's song
In a foreign land?
If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget her cunning.
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth,
If I remember thee not;
If I set not Jerusalem
Above my chiefest joy. (Ps. 137)

Their song was stilled, their hearts were sorrowful, but they vowed to remember Jerusalem. Here is the basis for the modern movement known as Zionism. The captives nourished the hope for the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the restoration of the temple. Whoever understands the Jewish tradition sympathizes with this love for the holy city and the holy land.

But was God then not to be worshiped at all? This was unthinkable. The captive leaders soon came to see that God could be worshiped without sacrifices. Three times a day therefore, at the hours when the priests had been wont to sacrifice in the temple, the captives in Babylon would gather to pray and recite psalms, and especially to repeat the Shema Yisroel and thus testify to the oneness of God. These daily prayer meetings were the beginning of the synagogue

and the forerunner of the church of Christendom and the mosque of Mohammedanism. Five times a day, at the call of the muezzin, the Mohammedan worships, and on Friday he goes to his mosque for special services. Regular services are held in Christian churches as in synagogues. Only these religions which have grown out of Judaism have such regular public worship. The synagogue was born in Babylon. There was to be one temple but many synagogues. In the former, there were sacrifices and prayer; in the latter, only prayer.

Another question troubled the leaders in Babylon: Would the religion so laboriously developed from Moses through the prophets disappear? As long as there was a Jewish state, however wicked the people became, a few were always left who clung to the faith. Always prophets arose who purified it, who denounced wrongdoing and aroused the king and the people. But now that the Jewish state no longer existed, what was to be the fate of Judaism? Would the new way of life developed by the prophets be overwhelmed by the more powerful cultures of the world? This was the leaders' answer: Judaism must be saved at all costs. But it can be saved and its blessings made available only by saving the Jews. As long as there are Jews there will be Judaism, they reasoned. Therefore their efforts must be concentrated on preserving the Jews.

But if the Jews were to survive, they must be made different from those among whom they lived, and they must be made aware of their difference. This end could be achieved by a distinctive ritual and by a study of the distinctive Jewish literature. Thus the Babylonian leaders gave a new turn to Jewish history and probably made possible this miracle of history, that Jews should continue to exist as a distinct group long after their land had been conquered and their nation scattered. But more important, thus they put in motion the forces which led to the compiling of the Torah and the Bible and to the establishment of schools

where the Bible was studied, so that the Jew became intellectual as well as religious.

Ezekiel — The Priestly Element in Prophetic Religion

The prophet Ezekiel, whose life spans two periods of Jewish history — the period before the destruction of the temple and the period of the captivity — resembles very much a Jew who lived six hundred years later and became the organizer of the Christian church. I refer to Saul, the Jew of Tarsus, whose name in Greek was Paul. Paul, a man frail in body but of deep religious feeling, created a philosophical and theological system by virtue of which the church survived. Ezekiel performed a similar service for Judaism. Like Paul, he was an epileptic, and not infrequently when recovering from his fits or seizures he saw visions of which he later made use to instruct, inspire or threaten his people. He spoke of seeing angels near the throne of God and similar apparitions. Many books have been written speculating as to his meaning.

Like the prophets who preceded him, Ezekiel predicted the downfall of Jerusalem — an event he witnessed. He went to Babylon with the captives and became their pastor. In Babylon he evolved the belief that every man is punished for his own sins, not for the sins of his fathers. He taught and encouraged the people and assured them that they would return to their homeland, for he knew that God would forgive repentant sinners. He put his vision of the future into writing:

> Then [the Lord] said unto me: 'Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel; behold, they say: Our bones are dried up, and our hope is lost; we are clean cut off. Therefore prophesy, and say unto them: Thus saith the Lord God: Behold, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, O My people; and I will bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord . . . And I will put My

spirit in you, and ye shall live, and I will place you in your own land; and ye shall know that I the Lord have spoken, and performed it, saith the Lord.' (Ezek. 37:11–14)

But unlike the other great prophets, Ezekiel did not condemn ritual; he approved it, for he believed that it would help righteousness. The other prophets had seen so much of the perversion of ritual that they opposed it. Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah alike condemned the observance of the Sabbath. Ezekiel declared that violation of the Sabbath was one of the sins for which Israel was being punished. He was convinced that a religion without definite rules and ritual would disappear. Therefore he prepared an elaborate system of ritual laws, and thus became the founder of that ceremonial Judaism which, alongside high ethical ideals, found expression in the Torah and the Talmud. Ezekiel must have known that a system of ritual tends to obscure the ideal and to become an end in itself, but he was willing to take the chance. He probably assumed that in other ages, other prophets would arise to insist that the ritual is secondary and the ethical and spiritual ideals are primary. Apparently he felt that without a ritual, a vessel to contain it, the most glorious ideal might disappear from the hearts and minds of men. The laws were to be the body, the religion of the prophets the soul of Judaism. He wanted to save the faith, but since in his view the people of Israel were the medium for its preservation, his immediate aim was to preserve the people.

Ezekiel was both priest and prophet. The ritual forms he created were intended to perpetuate the spirit of religion. Some of those who followed him, however, kept only the forms and forgot the spirit.

The Second Isaiah, the Prophet of the Missionary Spirit

Thirty years after Ezekiel, about 540 B.C.E., there appeared among the exiles in Babylon their most gifted son, a

prophet of tenderness and vision. His name and the facts of his life are unknown, but his message has been preserved for us. Because his words are found in chapters 40–55 of the Book of Isaiah, he is called the Second Isaiah.

The Second Isaiah perceived that Babylon's days as a great empire were numbered. Though God had used Babylon to punish Israel, it was not to escape the fate that justice demanded. In the person of the Persian emperor, Cyrus the Great, God was sending the rod to chastise it. So the Second Isaiah proclaimed Babylon's doom to his people and encouraged them in words that to this day lift the heart:

> Comfort ye, comfort ye My people,
> Saith your God.
> Bid Jerusalem take heart,
> And proclaim unto her,
> That her time of service is accomplished,
> That her guilt is paid off;
> That she hath received of the Lord's hand
> Double for all her sins.
>
> Hark! one calleth:
> 'Clear ye in the wilderness the way of the Lord,
> Make plain in the desert
> A highway for our God.
> Every valley shall be lifted up,
> And every mountain and hill shall be made low;
> And the rugged shall be made level,
> And the rough places a plain;
> And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed,
> And all flesh shall see it together;
> For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.'
>
> (Isa. 40:1–5)

Ezekiel had advised the people so to build up their national life that they would survive as a group. He wanted to preserve the nation in order to preserve the religion. The Second Isaiah wanted to preserve the religion for the

benefit of all mankind. Ezekiel was interested in national glory. The Second Isaiah was interested in spiritual glory. He was willing that national glory should fade if only spiritual glory could be achieved. He proclaimed an overpowering ideal: that the Jews had a mission to perform, a task to fulfill, that was to be of benefit to all the race of men. He carved out an empire for his people — an empire of ideals. The glory of the Jews should be not to rule over many subject peoples but rather to serve many peoples by bringing them knowledge of the one God of the universe.

To realize this mission, the prophet knew, would be difficult. It would bring suffering and martyrdom to many a Jew. It would lead to persecution. In a series of beautiful poems he set forth the concept that the Jewish people was to be the suffering servant of God through ministering to the spiritual welfare of mankind. He would have his whole nation become "a kingdom of priests." He urged the task with compelling eloquence. He saw Israel chosen by God for service. Here is the true understanding of the term "chosen people" — chosen not for special material favors or gain, but rather for the voluntary assumption of a noble task.

Behold My servant, whom I uphold;
Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth;
I have put My spirit upon him,
He shall make the right to go forth to the nations. . . .
A bruised reed shall he not break,
And the dimly burning wick shall he not quench;
He shall make the right to go forth according to the truth.
He shall not fail nor be crushed,
Till he have set the right in the earth;
And the isles shall wait for his teaching.

Thus saith God the Lord, . . .
I the Lord have called thee in righteousness,
And have taken hold of thy hand,
And kept thee, and set thee for a covenant of the people,

For a light of the nations;
To open the blind eyes,
To bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
And them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house.
(Isa. 42:1–7)

The Jews were to be a light to the nations; they were to emancipate humanity from the bondage of superstition, of paganism, of unethical relationships. Again and again the prophet declares that the mission of the Jews is universal:

Yea, He saith: ' It is too light a thing that thou shouldest be My servant
To raise up the tribes of Jacob,
And to restore the offspring of Israel;
I will also give thee for a light of the nations,
That My salvation may be unto the end of the earth.'
(Isa. 49:6)

Isaiah foresaw that his people would be persecuted and that men, forgetting that persecution is a sign of the weakness of those who inflict it, not of its victims, would believe that the Jews were at fault. In one of his most quoted passages he describes how one day the suffering servant shall be lifted up and the startled nations shall see " that which had not been told them ":

' He had no form nor comeliness, that we should look upon him,
Nor beauty that we should delight in him.
He was despised, and forsaken of men,
A man of pains, and acquainted with disease,
And as one from whom men hide their face:
He was despised, and we esteemed him not.
Surely our diseases he did bear, and our pains he carried;
Whereas we did esteem him stricken,
Smitten of God, and afflicted.
But he was wounded because of our transgressions,
He was crushed because of our iniquities:
The chastisement of our welfare was upon him,
And with his stripes we were healed.' (Isa. 53:2–5)

This was the noble but tragic purpose for which the Jew was to live. Through his sufferings all men were to be healed. As we think of the religion that came from the Jews and of the solace and hope it has brought to countless generations of men, we can appreciate the vision of this prophet.

But the Second Isaiah did not end on a tragic note. Serving God was triumph, was victory, greatness and glory.

For ye shall go out with joy,
And be led forth with peace;
The mountains and the hills shall break forth before you into singing,
And all the trees of the field shall clap their hands.
Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress,
And instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle; . . .
For My salvation is near to come,
And My favor to be revealed. (Isa. 55:12–13; 56:1)

Through God, the Second Isaiah gave to the Jews a great and honorable task. He made them a missionary people who were to bring to all men knowledge of the one God and teach them to walk in his way.

Ezra and Nehemiah, the Priestly Preservers of Prophetic Religion

What the Second Isaiah had expected came to pass. Cyrus the Great conquered Babylon and informed the Jewish captives that they were free to return to Jerusalem to rebuild their temple and re-establish their national life. Under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah they did so. But on arriving in the holy city they were shocked and stunned at the degeneration that had taken place among their people. Nebuchadnezzar's intentions had been fulfilled. Discouraged by the loss of their leaders, the Jews left in Jerusalem gave up the struggle and yielded to paganism. The returning exiles recognized that if Judaism was to be saved for humanity stern measures must be taken and a rigid disci-

pline imposed. The people must be made continuously aware of the existence of the one God and of their duty to obey him alone.

To accomplish their goal they set up a program of reconstruction. Adopting Ezekiel's view of the value of ritual as a preserver of religion, they devised a system of laws to govern the daily life of the Jew. They established rigid Sabbath laws and defined the system of sacrifices. The great festivals were given permanence and the manner of their observance was specified. The descendants of Aaron were named as priests.

One of the laws forbade intermarriage between Jews and non-Jews. The returned exiles saw that when Jews married foreign wives, the wives brought their foreign religion with them and like good mothers taught that religion to their children. The result was that Judaism had begun to disappear from the home and hence from the nation. The exiles regarded intermarriage as an evil not because they believed in pure races or feared a mixture of races; they were not concerned with race, but with faith. So they forbade intermarriage and ordered that all foreign wives be put away. This was a cruel order. Probably it was never enforced, but for the future it prevented the type of marriage which would lead to loss of the faith in one God. About that time, in protest against this policy, there was written one of the greatest stories in all literature, the tale of Ruth. Ruth, a Moabite, was the wife of a Jew and a model of self-sacrifice, loyalty and sweetness. Though not of Jewish birth she became the great-grandmother of David, from whom the royal family was descended. That the Book of Ruth was put into the Bible is proof of the broad-mindedness of its editors, who thus revealed their belief that goodness and decency were not limited to one people or one nation.

In the eyes of many, Jewish law consists of narrow, ritualistic prescriptions for the observance of ceremonies. This

view is inaccurate. The most ritualistic book of the Bible is the Book of Leviticus, but in its nineteenth chapter are found the most notable ethical and social laws ever devised by man. Consider, for example, these commands:

> And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corner of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleaning of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather the fallen fruit of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and for the stranger. . . . Thou shalt not oppress thy neighbor, nor rob him; the wages of a hired servant shall not abide with thee all night until the morning. Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind. . . . Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor favor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor. Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people; . . . Thou shalt not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. (Lev. 19:9–18)

Christian critics of Judaism, when confronted with the verse, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," have asserted that by "neighbor" the Torah means only a fellow Jew. As if to anticipate this criticism and refute it, in the same chapter of Torah is to be found the command: "The stranger that sojourneth with you shall be unto you as the home-born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Lev. 19:33–34). For Judaism was to bless not Jews alone, but all humanity. Stranger and native were equal in God's sight and in Judaism's, and therefore the Jew was commanded to love his fellow man irrespective of his race, faith or nationality.

To be sure, Leviticus contains also a great many ritual laws. The rebuilders of the Jewish community believed that without ritual the ethical and spiritual values would be lost. They devised the ritual to preserve the spiritual values. Sometimes the ritual crushed the spirit. Such

times called for reformers and prophets, and invariably God sent them.

The returned exiles and their followers rendered another great service to Judaism. They began to gather the literature of their ancestors in order that it might be preserved. In this period the editors of the Torah arose. They collected the legends and tales of the people and rewrote them to convey their religious views. Ritualists though they were, they saved the writings of the prophets, who condemned ritual. They rewrote Jewish history, not as scientific historians anxious to preserve the details of the past, but as preachers who had a religious ideal which they wanted to illustrate. Thus the books of Kings are primarily records not of warlike feats and conquests, but of actions which were right or wrong in the sight of God. Chapters 14 through 16 of II Kings, for instance, are a list of rulers, some good and some evil. The editors of the Torah read their own moral ideals into Jewish history. They knew that one God ruled the world and disposed of men and nations. After preparing the Torah, they instituted public readings of it on weekdays and on the Sabbath, the observance of which latter was a cardinal part of the faith. The Sabbath was to be a day for rest and for study of the principles of religion.

The returned exiles created the external forms of Judaism which have survived through the ages. The Bible as we have it is their work. They were reformers, editors, organizers — a generation of St. Pauls. How well they builded is proved by the fact that Judaism lives today though Jews are scattered far and wide. Ezra and Nehemiah were the leaders in that reformation. They, the priests, sought to preserve the faith which the prophets had created.

Jonah — The Climax of Prophetic Religion

No biblical book better sums up the religion of the prophets and the mission of the Jew than the frequently misunderstood Book of Jonah. This book was written not by Jonah, but about him. It tells of his adventures and of the lesson God taught him through them. The most dramatic incident in the story relates how Jonah was swallowed by a whale and lived in its belly. The whale, however, swallowed not only Jonah but the great religious ideal which the author of the book was seeking to propagate. Men have dissipated much energy in endeavoring to prove or disprove the historicity of the tale and the practicability of living inside a fish. Alas that such controversy has been permitted to overshadow the prophetic truth! Only religious fanatics would expend their talents in the attempt to prove what is patently impossible. Here is either a miracle, above science, or else a legend. I believe it to be a legend. But whatever one's attitude toward Jonah's submarine voyage, the great teaching of the book remains.

Jonah, a Hebrew prophet, heard the voice of God commanding him to go to Nineveh and tell its people that they were doomed because of their wickedness, but if they would repent God would pardon them and withhold destruction. Jonah did not care to go to the help of Nineveh, for that city was the capital of Babylon, whose ruler had conquered Jerusalem. Why should a Hebrew prophet go to the aid of Babylonians? Jonah wanted to see Nineveh destroyed; certainly he would lift no hand to save it. So he took ship for Tarshish at the other end of the Mediterranean. There, he thought, God could not reach him. God was supreme in Palestine but powerless in Spain. But God quickly proved to Jonah that he was master of the universe. A terrific storm enveloped the ship and its fury did not abate until Jonah had been tossed overboard. A whale caught him

and after retaining him in its belly for several days deposited him on the shore. Again Jonah heard God's voice, again its unwelcome command was clear. To Nineveh he must go and proclaim against its sins that the people might be saved. This time Jonah obeyed, although reluctantly. What he feared happened. The people of Nineveh heard his words, mended their ways and were saved by the God of love from the penalty they had merited. Jonah was heartbroken. That he had saved his foes was a thought which nearly drove him mad with bitterness. Then God sent a gourd to grow over Jonah and shelter him from the sun's heat. Jonah rejoiced, but when the gourd wilted his grief became more intense. Then God said to him: "You grieve over a gourd which you did not create. Shall I not grieve over Nineveh's people, who are my children?" Here the book ends.

What is its meaning? It is clear that Jonah was a Hebrew nationalist who loved his nation above all others and hated its foes. To serve his country's enemies was a bitter task for him and he could not be brought to do it without a spiritual struggle. But God taught him that to serve and save enemies is a duty.

Jonah, however, is not a historical character. The Hebrew word *Jonah* means "dove." The dove was the symbol of Judea as the eagle is of America. Jonah was called the son of Amittai. *Amittai* means "truth." These names then are symbols. The Jewish people who had received the truth from God were in duty bound to preach that truth to all peoples, even their enemies. The unknown author of the Book of Jonah was urging his fellow Jews to be not narrow nationalists, but internationalists. He was championing the noblest conception of God and of conduct. God loves and forgives all men, and so must his servants the Jews. Furthermore, this mission of world service was one that the Jewish people could not evade. If they did so, tempests would threaten them and all humanity. Be-

cause of Jonah's rebelliousness, sailors of many nations were endangered. The command of God and the welfare of humanity alike demanded that the Jews forget their own woes and bring all peoples to a knowledge of the one God of love.

This dramatic tale of Jonah enshrines the kernel of Judaism. Once in a class on the philosophy of religion at a Baptist theological seminary the professor, a noble Christian and a gentle, liberal spirit, declared that the best in the New Testament is merely a repetition of the ideal of the Book of Jonah, and that Jesus added nothing to the religious doctrine of the Old Testament as set forth in that book. How many men in our day are courageous enough and big enough spiritually to proclaim and practice this highest religion?

The Bible was almost completed when the Book of Jonah appeared in the third century B.C.E. So one might call that book the last will and testament of the prophets. If any Jew wants to know what his place in the world scheme is, let him read the Book of Jonah. There is prophetic religion. There is the religion of the Old Testament. There is Judaism.

The Psalter

It was inevitable that the prophetic message of God should awaken artistic impulses and lead to creative expression. Reacting on the mind of Israel's poets, prophetic religion inspired a body of poetry that is unique in world literature. That poetry is found in the Book of Psalms, containing a hundred and fifty poems in which are represented all the religious feelings of man.

Tradition says that the psalms were written by King David, but even a superficial reading shows that to be impossible. Reference has already been made to Psalm 137, which was written during the Babylonian captivity. Other psalms were written during the Maccabean wars. Very few

date back to the time of David. A number were composed during periods of national travail, when the people saw their homes destroyed and their kin murdered by ruthless pagan foes. Such psalms breathe the desire that the evil-doer be punished and that just retribution be visited upon him. These clearly ignore the forgiving spirit of the Book of Jonah. The psalms are the work of many poets. They were part of the popular literature which was in time gathered into an anthology that has become the prayer book of many religions.

Since many poets created them, the psalms express many individual religious philosophies, reveal many moods and suit many occasions. One of the clearest recollections of my early childhood is seeing my paternal grandmother sitting in her rocking chair every morning reading psalms. How she could daily read and reread that same book I could not understand then. But I understand now. A peace and happiness that defy description always filled her when she read her psalm book. It lifted up her spirit and exalted her. When you are discouraged, try opening the psalm book even at random. Inevitably you will find some word, some thought, some glimpse of God that will prove just the tonic you need.

Many are the psalms that echo the ideals of the prophets. They are addressed to the righteous God who desires not sacrifices but good conduct. Here are a few verses from Psalm 51:

Create me a clean heart, O God;
And renew a stedfast spirit within me. . . .
O Lord, open Thou my lips;
And my mouth shall declare Thy praise.
For Thou delightest not in sacrifice, else would I give it;
Thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offering.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.
(Ps. 51:12–19)

Psalms 15 and 24 describe the religious person as conceived by prophetic religion:

> Lord, who shall sojourn in Thy tabernacle?
> Who shall dwell upon Thy holy mountain?
> He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness,
> And speaketh truth in his heart;
> That hath no slander upon his tongue,
> Nor doeth evil to his fellow,
> Nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbor; . . .
> He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not;
> He that putteth not out his money on interest,
> Nor taketh a bribe against the innocent. (Ps. 15:1–5)

Incidentally, the verse about putting money out on interest is especially challenging for us who live in a capitalistic system, which is based on the taking of interest. Later Bible students interpreted " interest " as usury, that is, excessive interest. But the original psalmist meant simply interest. He lived in another type of civilization.

The poet of Psalm 24 requires clean hands and a pure heart as fundamentals in religion — that is, a life of goodness and a mind and heart sympathetic to ideals. When we think of the many things over which religious people have quarreled which were not concerned with clean hands and pure hearts, we realize how far they have failed to practice prophetic religion.

There are many psalms which emphasize faith and trust in God. All the prophets were filled with faith. It gave them their vision and the courage to proclaim it. It strengthened them in the face of hostility. It was the soul of their ministry. The most famous of all these psalms of trust in God is the twenty-third:

> The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.
> He maketh me to lie down in green pastures;
> He leadeth me beside the still waters.
> He restoreth my soul;
> He guideth me in straight paths for His name's sake.

Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil,
For Thou art with me;
Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies;
Thou hast anointed my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life;
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

Here are faith, trust and confidence. Here is the way to peace and courage. Even in the face of one's enemies, the Divine Shepherd prepares a table of life. Even in the valley of death, the nearness of God expels all fears. No wonder that the reading of this psalm is requested more frequently than that of any other.

Whenever I read the opening verses of Psalm 27, my spirits are uplifted and I feel encouraged and refreshed. There are a power and a strength in these words that always affect me profoundly. After I read them, no task is too difficult, no noble cause hopeless, no challenging ideal impossible of realization:

The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?
When evil-doers came upon me to eat up my flesh,
Even mine adversaries and my foes, they stumbled and fell.
Though a host should encamp against me,
My heart shall not fear;
Though war should rise up against me,
Even then will I be confident. (Ps. 27:1–3)

Another theme on which the psalmists love to dwell is the lovingkindness of God. Thus Psalm 33 describes how the "earth is full of the lovingkindness of the Lord," and Psalm 36 celebrates his bounties:

Thy lovingkindness, O Lord, is in the heavens;
Thy faithfulness reacheth unto the skies.

Thy righteousness is like the mighty mountains;
Thy judgments are like the great deep;
Man and beast Thou preservest, O Lord.
How precious is Thy lovingkindness, O God!
And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Thy wings.
They are abundantly satisfied with the fatness of Thy house;
And Thou makest them drink of the river of Thy pleasures.
(Ps. 36:6–9)

Sometimes the poet, filled to overflowing with a sense of God's majesty, bursts forth in words whose beauty has been intensified by time:

O Lord, our Lord,
How glorious is Thy name in all the earth!
Whose majesty is rehearsed above the heavens. . . .
When I behold Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers,
The moon and the stars, which Thou hast established;
What is man, that Thou art mindful of him?
And the son of man, that Thou thinkest of him?
Yet Thou hast made him but little lower than the angels,
And hast crowned him with glory and honor.
Thou hast made him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands;
Thou hast put all things under his feet. . . .
O Lord, our Lord,
How glorious is Thy name in all the earth! (Ps. 8)

Not merely the majesty of God in nature is here voiced, but the thought that in that vast scheme puny man is important. He is tiny alongside the mighty heavens and the stars strewn in limitless space. Yet because of his moral nature he is "but little lower than the angels," and to him God has given dominion over all.

The psalmists understood the meaning of the law in Judaism. The law was neither harsh nor difficult. It was obeyed gladly because it was God's will. So the poet declares:

Happy is the man that hath not walked in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor stood in the way of sinners,
Nor sat in the seat of the scornful.
But his delight is in the law of the Lord;
And in His law doth he meditate day and night. (Ps. 1:1–2)

Or again:

The law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul;
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.
The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.
The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever;
The ordinances of the Lord are true, they are righteous altogether. (Ps. 19:8–10)

These verses are reminiscent of the words in Proverbs which declare that those who uphold the law find happiness. Submitting to the yoke, the discipline of God, was the greatest joy in Judaism.

The Psalter is filled with praise of God, and thanksgiving of the soul fully aware of his goodness. Among these poems Psalm 118 is the best known, for its recital is part of the regular service on major and minor holidays, and it has been set to majestic music loved by worshipers in the synagogue:

'O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,
For His mercy endureth for ever.'
So let Israel now say,
For His mercy endureth for ever. . . .
The Lord is my strength and song;
And He is become my salvation.
The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tents of the righteous;
The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.
The right hand of the Lord is exalted; . . .
I shall not die, but live,
And declare the works of the Lord. (Ps. 118:1–17)

The last poem in the Psalter, Psalm 150, is sheer praise of God, perhaps the most magnificent hymn of praise ever written. Its rhythm and exquisite beauty appear even in translation:

Hallelujah.
Praise God in His sanctuary;
Praise Him in the firmament of His power.
Praise Him for His mighty acts;
Praise Him according to His abundant greatness.
Praise Him with the blast of the horn;
Praise Him with the psaltery and harp.
Praise Him with the timbrel and dance;
Praise Him with stringed instruments and the pipe.
Praise Him with the loud-sounding cymbals;
Praise Him with the clanging cymbals.
Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.
Hallelujah.

A people that daily sings the psalms cannot be hopelessly downcast or long discouraged, can never be defeated. It becomes as invincible as God.

The Book of Job

Not only in poetry did prophetic religion express itself, but also in drama. Men like Ezekiel and other followers of the prophets, who did not fully understand their message, began to teach that suffering, sickness, poverty and other misfortunes are invariably punishments inflicted by a just God. They believed that God rewarded the good and punished the wicked. If the good suffered it was because of some secret fault. They could not otherwise understand why some people who were good should suffer while others who were wicked should be fortunate. As a matter of fact, the prophets never taught quite that. They knew life too well to teach what common experience refutes. Everyone knows fine people who have a hard time in life; likewise

everyone knows mean and greedy and unscrupulous people who prosper materially.

An unknown prophet did not like the smug way in which the followers of Ezekiel attributed all human woes to moral evil. Because he could not speak out directly against this belief, he wrote a powerful play, the Book of Job, which was put into the Bible by editors who believed that Ezekiel's view should not go unchallenged. This drama has been studied by the great minds of all times for, aside from its artistic value, it addresses itself to a question that still plagues mankind: Why do the innocent suffer and the wicked prosper?

Job was righteous in the eyes of man and God, and he prospered. He had many sons and daughters and possessed great wealth. One day Satan, the evil spirit, came into God's presence and declared that Job was good only because God had given him so much. Just make Job suffer, take away his wealth, and he will cease to be good and will lose his faith, Satan asserted. So God gave Satan permission to do anything to Job except touch his person. Satan gleefully set about proving his assertion. He destroyed all Job's property and caused his ten children and their families to die. But Job kept his faith and said,

> The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away.
> Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Then Satan insisted that Job was good because his body was whole. If he were to suffer physical pain and decay he would lose his faith. So God gave Satan permission to do anything to Job's body except kill him. Satan smote Job with boils, perhaps with leprosy. Job's wife, overcome by these misfortunes, advised her husband to "blaspheme God, and die." But Job rejected her advice in words that have become classic: "What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" And Job kept his faith.

Hearing of his calamity, three of his closest friends came

to comfort him. So great was Job's grief that for seven days and seven nights his friends sat by him and did not speak a word. Then Job broke out into lamentations over his misfortunes and protests at their injustice. To the best of his knowledge and ability he had done everything God commanded, he declared, and yet he had been struck with overwhelming disasters. At this his friends were outraged for, as it seemed to them, by insisting that he was innocent Job was denying the justice of God. They demanded that he admit his guilt and recognize that suffering had come upon him because of wrongdoing. Job reiterated his protestations of innocence:

If I have walked with vanity,
And my foot hath hasted to deceit —
Let me be weighed in a just balance,
That God may know mine integrity —
If my step hath turned out of the way, . . .
Then let me sow and let another eat; . . .
If I did despise the cause of my man-servant,
Or of my maid-servant, when they contended with me . . .
If I have withheld aught that the poor desired,
Or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail;
Or have eaten my morsel myself alone,
And the fatherless hath not eaten thereof . . .
If I have seen any wanderer in want of clothing, . . .
And if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep;
If I have lifted up my hand against the fatherless, . . .
If I have made gold my hope, . . .
If I rejoiced because my wealth was great . . .
If I rejoiced at the destruction of him that hated me,
Or exulted when evil found him . . .
If after the manner of men I covered my transgressions . . .
If my land cry out against me, . . .
If I have eaten the fruits thereof without money,
Or caused the tillers thereof to be disappointed —
Let thistles grow instead of wheat,
And noisome weeds instead of barley. (Job 31:5–40)

Here is an excellent definition of the godly man as conceived by Judaism. Job has not been vain nor has he been carried away by his wealth; he has been just toward his servants and has helped the poor, the widow and the orphan; he has aided the stranger and has not abandoned the worship of God; he has not rejoiced over the misfortunes of his enemies; he has not feared the opinion of men but has walked in God's way. What a lofty code of living is revealed in these words! Yet though Job insists that he has been the victim of injustice, he holds fast to his faith and declares that some day God will vindicate him:

> But as for me, I know that my Redeemer liveth,
> And that He will witness at the last upon the dust;
> And when after my skin this is destroyed,
> Then without my flesh shall I see God;
> Whom I, even I, shall see for myself,
> And mine eyes shall behold, and not another's.
> (Job 19:25–27)

The unknown author of Job finds an answer to the problem of innocent suffering: the ways of the infinite God are beyond the grasp of man. In beautiful words, the dramatist sets forth the majesty and greatness of God:

> Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said:
> Who is this that darkeneth counsel
> By words without knowledge?
> Gird up now thy loins like a man;
> For I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto Me.
> Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?
> Declare, if thou hast the understanding.
> Who determined the measures thereof, if thou knowest?
> Or who stretched the line upon it?
> Whereupon were the foundations thereof fastened?
> Or who laid the corner-stone thereof,
> When the morning stars sang together,
> And all the sons of God shouted for joy?
> Or who shut up the sea with doors,

When it broke forth, and issued out of the womb;
When I made the cloud the garment thereof,
And thick darkness a swaddling-band for it,
And prescribed for it My decree.
And set bars and doors,
And said: 'Thus far shalt thou come, but no further;
And here shall thy proud waves be stayed'? (Job 38:1–11)

And Job acknowledged his pygmy stature and recognized that God is just even though men cannot always clearly understand that justice:

Then Job answered the Lord, and said:
I know that Thou canst do every thing,
And that no purpose can be withholden from Thee.
Who is this that hideth counsel without knowledge?
Therefore have I uttered that which I understood not,
Things too wonderful for me, which I knew not.
Hear, I beseech Thee, and I will speak;
I will demand of Thee, and declare Thou unto me.
I had heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear;
But now mine eye seeth Thee;
Wherefore I abhor my words, and repent,
Seeing I am dust and ashes. (Job 42:1–6)

In supreme faith in God, Job finds peace. He suffers though innocent. But who is mortal man to question the actions of God? Let him bow before the decrees of the Almighty.

Thus did our unknown author challenge the view that the wicked suffer and the righteous are happy. True, the wicked may prosper materially, but what must be their misery when they face God? And the righteous may suffer, but they are near to God and that is supreme happiness. To retain faith in God under all circumstances is man's greatest destiny.

The Book of Daniel

The religion of the prophets was difficult to practice. Even more difficult was it to teach that religion to all the

children of men. Isaiah of the exile knew that, and hence spoke of Israel as the suffering servant of God. And Jews did suffer. In the days of the Syrian king Antiochus their suffering was especially great. Antiochus decreed death for all who refused to worship an idol that he had set up. Like many another conqueror, he hoped to crush the Jews by crushing Judaism. Many Jews were weak and abandoned the faith. If all had been weak Judaism would have disappeared, the Bible would have been lost, and Christianity and Mohammedanism could never have arisen. But many remained steadfast and suffered martyrdom. An unknown prophet of those days, fearing that the people would become utterly disheartened, determined to bolster their courage. He did this by writing a story, the Book of Daniel.

That story tells of several youths of ancient times who refused to bow to the king's idol and therefore were cast into a fiery furnace, but they were saved and their would-be executioners were burned instead. Daniel, however, is the particular hero of the book that bears his name. He was a Hebrew youth, one of the many governors appointed by Darius, the Persian emperor. Being a faithful Jew, Daniel rendered conscientious service to his royal master, who showered honors upon him. The other governors were jealous of him and plotted his destruction. Knowing that Daniel prayed regularly to the one God, they induced Darius to decree that whoever, in the next thirty days, made a petition to anyone, God or man, except the king himself, should be thrown into a den of lions. Daniel was aware what the consequences would be, yet he refused to pray stealthily, but worshiped his God openly from the roof of his palace, as he had done heretofore. When the king learned that Daniel had defied his decree he realized that he had been trapped. He wanted to revoke the law, but the laws of the Medes could never be changed. So Daniel was thrown into the den of lions. But God was with him, and he was saved.

This beautiful story was written in a time of persecution to give courage and steadfastness to a sorely tried people. Its author predicted the fall of the tyrant, and the tyrant did fall. The temple was rededicated, Judaism was saved and faith in God vindicated. Many a Jew in subsequent times found renewed hope as he read the story of Daniel, who preferred death to disloyalty to God.

The Codes of the Bible

The letters J, E, D and P have become important symbols for the modern biblical student. They represent four different influences in the growth and development of Bible literature, especially of the Torah. It has already been stated that the Torah is the result of the labor of many men over many centuries. The contradictions in it, the different ideas of God, the conflicting moral standards, the historical references, the various styles of writing, all reveal this multiple authorship. Scholars have gone over the Torah carefully and tried to discover in what century each chapter and verse were written, what type of men wrote various parts of it, what their motives were and what they actually wrote.

It is obvious that after twenty-five hundred years such an undertaking is difficult, if not impossible, and the results are bound to be partially inaccurate and the target of intellectual bombardments. Nevertheless, in general scholars agree that the Torah is the work of four groups of religious leaders and writers and that their several contributions can be partly identified. These groups have been designated by the initials J, E, D and P respectively. The letters symbolize great movements which swept over Hebrew religious thought like tidal waves and left their traces on biblical literature.

The earliest Bible writers are known as the J group. The initial comes from "Jahveh" (now often spelled "Yahveh"), which is the anglicized form of the Hebrew name of

God. *Jahveh* means " he who causes life." God was named after his chief function, Creator. But to the Hebrews " Jahveh " as a name of God was unknown because God's name was regarded as so sacred that it was never pronounced, except by the high priest on important occasions such as the Day of Atonement. It was however necessary to have some word to designate God, and the ancient Jews created a sort of nickname for him, Adonoy, meaning " my master." The vowels of " Adonoy " were added to the Hebrew letters JHVH, and while this combination actually reads " Jehovah " it was always pronounced " Adonoy " by Jews. Christian Bible readers however, being unfamiliar with this Jewish tradition, pronounced the word " Jehovah." Today liberal Jews no longer share the old fear of speaking God's name and unhesitatingly say " Jahveh."

Bible scholars are convinced that Jahveh was the name of the God whom Moses learned to know in the desert when he fled from Pharaoh. The great leader taught the Hebrew tribes he had emancipated to worship this God of his. Subsequently this desert god became the God of the Jewish nation, and when the Hebrews, under the influence of the prophets, recognized God as one and as ruler of the universe, the old name was retained. The J group were writers who whenever they referred to God used the word Jahveh, and only that word. They were close to the desert tradition and clung to the name of the desert god. These men wrote a history of the world in order to show the place of the Hebrews in the universal scheme. They used the old tales, legends and myths to convey the new ideas of religion and morality that they had accepted as the result of prophetic teaching, particularly that of Amos. Of the J writers a Christian scholar says: " They were not merely historians, but wonderful teachers of religion. Yahveh was to them the one great God, the creator, the only God of Israel. He controlled the forces of nature, and also the forces of history. He is a moral God who demands righteousness, re-

wards faith and kindness, innocence and unselfishness, but punishes wickedness and oppression in the whole earth. Such is Israel's God, and to Him the people must be loyal."

It is interesting to observe that the J writers did not believe in only one temple. They recognized sacred trees and sacred wells. Their idea of God is sometimes crude and primitive, but it holds the seed of ethical monotheism. The J code is that part of the Torah which, scholars believe, was written by the earliest school of Hebrew religious teachers. It was the first rudimentary history of Israel, and is found in the earliest sections of the Torah.

The second group of Torah editors are known as the E group. They used the word Elohim to refer to God and are therefore known as Elohist writers. *Elohim* is the plural of the Hebrew *el,* which means "God." ("Allah," the Mohammedan name for God, comes from the same root as *el.*) That the E writers used "Elohim" — "gods" — to refer to "God," shows that they had given up the belief in many divinities and recognized only one God. Like the J school, the E writers compiled a history of Israel to demonstrate that God's power was manifest in that history. They used historical material to illustrate their religious ideas. They repeat many of the tales used by the J writers and add or subtract details.

Another distinct group of contributors to the Torah were the D writers, or Deuteronomists, who were responsible for the political reform instituted in the days of King Josiah. Their emphasis was on one God and one temple. Their laws and ideas are to be found in the Book of Deuteronomy.

Last came the P writers, representatives of the priestly school of thought which, under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, appeared upon the scene after the Babylonian captivity. They gathered the literature of the Jews and changed it to suit their ideas. They poured the history of Israel into the mold of their beliefs. They set forth a lofty concept of God and established a minute and exacting rit-

ual law. The Torah in its final form is their work, completed about 500 B.C.E. — some nine hundred years after Moses. When they had finished they ordered the formal public reading and acceptance of the Torah. A record of that great event is found in the Book of Nehemiah:

> And when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel were in their cities, all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the broad place that was before the water gate; and they spoke unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the Law before the congregation, both men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein before the broad place that was before the water gate from early morning until midday . . . and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the Law. And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose . . . And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people — for he was above all the people — and when he opened it, all the people stood up. And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And all the people answered: 'Amen, Amen,' with the lifting up of their hands; and they bowed their heads, and fell down before the Lord with their faces to the ground. Also Jeshua, and Bani, and Sherebiah, . . . even the Levites, caused the people to understand the Law; and the people stood in their place. And they read in the book, in the Law of God, distinctly; and they gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading. (Neh. 8:1–8)

Thus it is that on Rosh Hashonoh — the New Year — the Torah was first presented to the people. Having a history believed to have been written at God's command, and a law revealed by him to Moses, the Jews felt that studying that history and understanding that law were of great importance. The priestly writers, fearing that another dispersion would make an end of the religion of the prophets, put it down in black and white so that even if its teachers perished the faith would live. They initiated the custom of

reading and teaching the Torah to the public. Whenever large crowds of people came together the Torah was read in the open. Especially was this so on market days, when shepherds and farmers came to the city to buy and sell.

Many of the people, however, could not understand Hebrew, which had ceased to be a spoken tongue. The masses spoke Aramaic, which is related to Hebrew as French and Spanish are to Latin. The reader therefore would translate the sacred words into Aramaic. Soon an Aramaic translation appeared, the first of many Bible translations. In time a Greek translation was made for Jews who lived in the Greek empire. That translation, the Septuagint, introduced Jewish ethical monotheism to the Greek world and was an important factor in paving the way for the spread of Judaism and for the dissemination of Christianity. It must be remembered that the New Testament was written in Greek, mostly by Jews.

The Torah readers not only translated for the public, but sometimes explained what they read. Here was the forerunner of the sermon. Originally the sermon was an explanation of a verse in the Torah, that is, an explanation of God's will. All modern sermons in churches and synagogues go back to this old practice of explaining Torah verses to ignorant masses. The man who gave the sermon had great power because people believed that he spoke in the name of God.

But the priestly writers were more anxious that the Torah be studied and they encouraged all Jews to learn to read it. Indeed later on men were admitted to Judaism only after they had proved in a public test that they could read the Torah and understand its laws, and were ready to obey God's will. Hence the Bar Mitzvah ceremony, in which youths of thirteen read the Torah in the synagogue and then become full-fledged Jews, responsible to God and man.

Notice that the Torah was read. That is very important,

for in the ancient world very few people were privileged to learn to read. But all male Jews were expected to be able to read the Torah. And they did read it. Thus the Jews became the first literate people in history — and, it may be said, the first exponents of democracy. Tyranny becomes difficult when the masses have knowledge and can read and write. Democracy began to spread in Europe after the printing press was invented and books were widely available, but to make democracy effective universal education had to be introduced. The Jews, the first people to practice universal education, planted the seed of democratic ideals.

Moreover, through widespread reading and study of the Torah the Jews became a literary and intellectual people. Hence they have been able to contribute much to any civilization which did not crush them and respected the powers of the mind and soul as well as sheer physical force. This must be remembered: that Jewish education was always religious, that the aim of study was to know better the will of God so that his word might be obeyed. Spinoza, Einstein, Freud, Bergson and a host of other Jewish intellectuals have enriched humanity because generations of intellectual training were behind them. Thus the influence of the priestly Torah writers stretches down the centuries.

Prophetic Judaism — A Summary

On the day when Ezra the scribe read the Torah to the assembled people, the efforts for the preservation of prophetic religion were completed. From the time of Moses that religion had been in the making. During these centuries, the people who formed the nucleus of the Jewish kingdom had an unusually rich and varied experience. A group of them had lived in Egypt, one of the great centers of ancient culture. Another group had lived in Babylon. Other groups had had contacts with Syria and Assyria, with Greece and Rome and Persia. Though conquered by these great powers, the Jews benefited by all their experiences.

These happenings left their influence on Jewish life and religion. They emancipated the Jew and made him a citizen of the world, whereas previously he had been a member of a tribe. They forced him to create a philosophy of humanity instead of a philosophy of nationalism. They contributed toward transforming the tribal religion of the ancient Semites into the universal faith of synagogue, church and mosque.

Palestine, the home of the Jew, is a bridge linking three continents. Over it passed the soldiers and conquerors of the ancient world, its ideas and ideals, its literature and art. To these was added the religious genius of the shepherd nomads to whom God in his wisdom gave new visions. The results were Isaiah and Jeremiah, Jesus and Paul, Mohammed and Luther — all spiritual children of that Judaism which was forged on the anvil of history through the kindness of the Lord of Hosts, who is one, and who deserves to be praised forever and ever.

Part II

THE FUNDAMENTALS OF JUDAISM — ITS THEOLOGY

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The Universality of Religion

RELIGION is a universal human experience. Since men have been recording history, no large group of people has been found anywhere which did not have some kind of religion. By "religion" I mean some form of worship of God or gods. People sometimes speak of godless religion, or remark that "baseball is my religion"; they are talking of something else.

Anyone who studies the history of religions is immediately struck by the many likenesses among the faiths of the world. Take the very primitive people in the bush of Australia: that people worships a god or gods and has developed a ceremonial in connection with its worship. Then turn to the Eskimos of North America, who so far as we know have had no contact whatever with the primitives of Australia. The Eskimos too have a god or gods, and their ways of worship are very similar to the Australians'. Again, many religions have sacred books. Judaism has the Bible; Confucianism, the Analects; Hinduism, the Vedantas. The holidays observed by the various religions are strangely alike when certain local differences are disregarded. The time of the year when the birth of the god or gods is celebrated and the methods of celebration are similar in different parts of the world, among peoples who could have had no communication with one another.

Totemism, the belief that animals were the ancestors of men and therefore ought to be worshiped, was widespread among primitive nations. So was animism, the belief that

gods dwelt in stones or other lifeless objects. To this day some people carry lucky stones with them. Originally a lucky stone was one in which a favorable god was supposed to dwell, and the idea of a lucky stone is a heritage from very ancient times. The belief that gods dwelt in trees or fertile lands, in wells or springs, in lakes or rivers or in the oceans was also widely current. The Bible refers to such beliefs among the ancient Hebrews. Again, worship of the sun or of fire was extremely common.

That there are so many likenesses among the religions of all times and places is not difficult to understand. Despite differences, human beings all over the world are essentially alike. They have the same general structure, the same sense organs, the same nervous, circulatory and digestive systems. They have the same fundamental needs and desires. They have the same capacity to think and feel. It is therefore reasonable to expect that they should develop the same types of institutions.

Hence the universality of the religious experience. When people begin to think, they begin to ask a good many questions. That is true of every child who bombards his parents with demands to know the " why " of everything. When man began to think, and so to be different from other animals, he began to ask himself questions: Why am I here? Who placed me here? How long do I live? Why do I live? How was I born? Why was I born? What happens to me when I die? What happened to my ancestors who have died? Where are they now? Do they have any command over my life? Who made the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, the ocean? Who is responsible for the fall of rain upon which the crops depend, for the increase of the flock upon which the food supply depends, for the drought which brings famine and death, for the thunder and lightning which terrify and destroy, for the growth of vegetation, for the movement of the tides, for day and night? These are questions about which any thinking creature is concerned,

and in an attempt to answer them all peoples in all stages of civilization have developed some form of religion.

These are not unimportant questions; they are all-important questions. They are unimportant to animals — to birds and toads and snakes, to cattle and sheep, to tigers and bears — because these lack the capacity for abstract thought. They live in the moment; they know nothing about history and do not think of the future. Not so with man, who has been called a thinking animal. He asks himself questions and looks for an answer. He is concerned about his future and the future of his children and of his nation — about the supply of food, about protection from storms and tempests, from ferocious animals and even from ferocious men; he is anxious about life, about death and about life after death.

Religions have grown up in response to these deeply felt needs of human beings, in an attempt to meet them, to placate and pacify the spirit of man, to solve the mystery of life and the secret of death. This need, this religious hunger, this feverish searching, this groping after certainty, has not been peculiar to any race or nation or group of men. It has appeared universally. Every human being in all recorded time has longed for answers to these questions — perhaps, at the dawn of history, only dimly, but more and more powerfully as the centuries piled up — and religion developed around the answers he found. The ancient Greeks believed that there were gods in charge of all the forces of nature. Neptune was the god of the sea, Apollo of the sun, Diana of the moon, Ceres of vegetation. The ancient Teutons had similar gods — Odin of the heavens, Thor of thunder, Balder of light and beauty, and so on. Other peoples gave their gods other names, but *they all had gods,* they all had some form of religion. They no more thought of trying to live without religion than of trying to live without food and air. The need for religion was as inescapable as the need for bodily nourishment.

Men who have thought about the matter have given many reasons for the origin of religion. Some have said that fear has led people to religion; others, that wonder or awe or a sense of the mystery of the universe has made them religious. Still others find yet different reasons. These are all hypotheses. It is difficult to analyze one's own emotions. It is much more difficult to analyze the emotions of people who lived hundreds, thousands, even millions of years ago. So it seems a little hasty to say that this or that factor alone gave rise to religion. The fact is that there was a need in man which could be satisfied only through some form of religious experience and some form of religious practice. That is why a thoughtful French philosopher once said that if there were no religion in the world, it would be necessary to create one. Religion has appeared among all men in all stages of development because men have needed it; and religion will live as long as this need demands an affirmative answer to the great questions about the origin and destiny of humanity.

The Belief in God of Prophetic Religion

Let us consider the belief about God developed by the prophets of Israel. This is by no means the same as the Bible belief about God. The Bible reveals many conceptions of God. Critics of Judaism have frequently failed to recognize that fact and have insisted that the Jewish belief about God must be identified with one of the ideas of God expressed in the Bible, and often a primitive idea is selected as the determinative one. Inasmuch as the Bible was written and edited over a period of a thousand years, it reveals many stages in the growth and development of the concept of God. In other sections of this book I have pointed out that the prophets were the creators of Judaism, that before their appearance the Hebrews' ideas of God were indistinguishable from those of other ancient and primitive peoples. Anyone who wants to know the Jewish idea of God

should study the great literary prophets, especially Amos and Hosea, the Isaiahs and Micah, Jeremiah and Jonah. These men on the anvils of their souls hammered out the concept of God which was to become dominant in Judaism, which was to be the flame of the synagogue and to give the Jew strength to live amid hostility over many centuries and to proclaim his faith in righteousness and mercy.

This does not mean that every prophetic idea of God is part of Jewish teaching today. The prophets were not philosophers; they did not undertake to analyze their ideas, to think them out logically and systematically. Great beliefs swept over them. God possessed them and they spoke their convictions. Men who have these great experiences do contradict themselves at times, but the contradictions become secondary. Through the prophets emerged the highest conception of God that any great religion has ever evolved, a conception which not only is basic to Judaism, but to this day constitutes the finest in the Christian and Mohammedan traditions.

Two dominant characteristics of the Jewish belief in God distinguish it from other ideas prevalent in the ancient world in which the prophets lived. They are expressed in the words "ethical monotheism." "Monotheism" means belief in one God. "Ethical" means concern with relationships of righteousness among human beings. As has been said, the ancient world believed that there were many gods, each restricted to a certain area where he dwelt and over which he ruled. When you moved from one country to another you changed your god, for it was foolish to worship a god in a land where he had no power. Some ancient peoples believed that there were gods who dwelt in every manifestation of nature and gods who were in charge of certain departments of life. All these were rejected by Judaism, which insisted that there could be only one God, one Creator, one Father of all men, one Spirit behind the entire universe. That is why "Hear, O Israel: The Lord

our God, the Lord is one," has become the supreme sentence of Judaism, taught first to little children as they begin to speak and uttered by the dying with their ebbing strength and their last breath.

It is at this point that Christianity and Judaism part company. Christianity accepted the Jewish concept of God and of God's ethical nature and his righteous and loving character. It did not accept Judaism's rigid, uncompromising monotheism, but modified it when it said that Jesus was a representation of God on earth in a sense in which no other human being was a representation of God. It spoke of the divinity of Jesus. Judaism could have accepted the humanity of Jesus, but to worship Jesus as one worships God was in direct contradiction with prophetic religion.

The second characteristic of the Jewish idea of God is that he is ethical, and that his dominant qualities are love, mercy and justice. You may recall that Hosea was the first among the great prophets to emphasize that love was part of the nature of God, and that a loving God sought not the death of sinners but their regeneration. That idea of love was developed by other prophets and found supreme expression in the Book of Jonah. In the Jewish prayer book, God is frequently called " Father of mercies," " Lover of humanity." But God is also just. He has made just laws for the universe and they must be obeyed. Those who violate God's laws must bear the penalty. That is why the prophets taught that a wicked Israel must be punished. God's justice, however, has in it no idea of vengeance. He punishes not from a desire to inflict pain, but in order to cure the sinner and overcome the evil. By wars, the fruit of injustice, men have learned — not too well, alas — that before they can have peace they must have justice. As long as they refuse to establish justice, so long wars will continue to plague them.

Because God's nature is characterized by love, mercy and justice, he wants men to worship him chiefly not through

ceremonies but through a life of love, justice and righteousness. The man who worships one ethical God whom he regards as the Goal of all of his desires must strive to make himself more and more like that God, for thus he comes closer to God, and only in nearness to God can peace and happiness be found.

If God was one, and ethical, and loving, it followed that he could not be something in a universe he had created. God could not be a tree because he created the tree. God could not be a picture or a statue because a picture or statue could not rule the universe. God could not be something made of gold or precious stones because these could not be just or loving. God therefore could not be represented by anything. As the second commandment expresses it: "Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, nor any manner of likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth" (Exod. 20:3–4). In the world of the prophets, men adored gods made of clay or wood or metal, or worshiped sacred trees or animals. The prophets knew the tendency of human beings to believe in what they can see or touch, and therefore sought desperately to uproot idol worship. The teachers of the synagogue decreed that in no Jewish house of worship should there be any representation of a human or animal form or of any other material thing. This was important and valuable for religion, though it did not help pictorial and plastic art.

Here again Christianity departs from the faith of the synagogue. The church, the child of the synagogue, coming to terms with the pagan world and the needs of primitive peoples, permitted images in its shrines and sanctuaries. The result has been that at times men worshiped the images instead of the one God of the universe. Mohammed however was tremendously impressed by the rigid monotheism of Judaism, and ordered the destruction of all idols, as the deuteronomic reformers had done. His religion soon be-

came a serious rival of the Christian church. In order to meet the competition that part of the church which had its headquarters in the Near East was compelled likewise to forbid the use of images. This step led to the break between the Eastern Church and the church which had its headquarters in Rome. Thus one of the serious divisions in Christianity was set in motion by the rigid monotheism which Mohammed had adopted from Judaism.

One God who is just, loving and righteous, who is invisible and the creator of the universe, who desires to be worshiped through righteousness — that is the belief that has dominated Judaism. But this God is also the God of history, whose will is unfolded in the vicissitudes of the nations. The whole process of man's growth is part of the will of God and a fulfillment of his purpose. Man cannot fully understand the will of God, he cannot see a purpose in everything that happens in the world. Nevertheless Judaism teaches that the purpose is there, and indeed at times human beings catch glimpses of it. Thus what appears to be evil and a denial of God's nature may later be seen as the means whereby nations and individuals are cleansed. History testifies to God's purpose for mankind and will witness its realization.

God is universal. He is not the God of one race or one nation or one class. He is the God of all human beings, all of whom are equal in his sight, all of whom he regards as his children, all of whom can approach him directly without the need of a mediator, and to all of whom he has promised a great destiny. This idea is expressed in the story of Adam, the parent of all mankind. He has nothing to do with race, nationality or denominational religious affiliation. He is just a human being.

Sometimes we are told that what men believe about God is not important, that how they live is what matters. On the surface this may appear to be a sound idea, for action seems more important than belief. But to those who think

more deeply it soon becomes evident that what one believes about God is of vast importance, for belief determines action. If I think my health is worth while I am going to watch my diet and my mode of living. If I think my health is not worth while I may waste my energy and dissipate my strength. What I believe about my health is going to determine what I do about it. What I believe about God tells you what I consider the most important things in life. If I believed that God cares only for Jews I might confine my interests to Jewish circles. I might be concerned about what happens to Jews in Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia, but I might not care what happened to other peoples in Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia. I would be content if Jews were safe. But because I believe that God is the father of all humanity I am concerned about all human beings in Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia — Jews or Christians, Mohammedans or Buddhists. Judaism compels me to have regard for other peoples and other religionists. If I believed that God cares only for the white race I should seek justice only for white people. But because I believe that God is the God of all races I must seek justice for the black and brown and yellow races as well as for the white. Judaism compels me to plead the cause of any victim of injustice, whatever his race. If I believed that God cares only for one nation I would think that he was always on the side of my own country, whether it was right or wrong, just or unjust. But because I believe that he is the God of all nations I know that he blesses my country, as he blesses all countries, only when it obeys his laws of justice and righteousness. Judaism compels me to be concerned with the welfare not merely of one nation, but of all nations. Thus does my belief in God affect my conduct.

In any attempt to describe God it must always be understood that we can speak of him only in human words and human ideas. The mind of man is too little to hold the greatness of God. We know that God is far beyond our

grasp. We are obliged to imprison him in the limitations of human thought and speech. So we describe him in terms of the best that we know, in terms of our highest values. What is the best thing in the universe so far as man's mind can comprehend? It is a human personality that hungers for justice, feels kinship with other peoples, strives after perfection, sacrifices, suffers and even dies for a good cause. Personality is the highest value that man knows. So we speak of God in terms of personality, as a personal God. A personal God is not one who looks or acts like a person, but one about whom we think in terms of the highest we know.

What proofs are there for the existence of God? Some philosophers have said that there must be a God because there must be a creator of the universe. Just as a watch implies a watchmaker or a house a builder, so a universe implies a universe-maker. There must be someone who created the universe. That someone is God. Other philosophers say that since there is a cause for everything that happens, there must have been a First Cause. We know that the moon causes the tides, that the absence of water causes deserts, that sunshine causes plants to grow. Somehow or other, sometime or other, there was a Cause that started the whole chain — God. Still other philosophers say that there must be a God because there is an idea of God in the mind of man. All these proofs, and others that I shall not outline, have intellectual value. It is stimulating to think about them. Religion however is indifferent to intellectual proofs of God's existence. If philosophers can find satisfactory proofs, religion will be content; but whether they find proofs or not, religion is going to cling to its faith. A believer in God believes not because he wants to but because he must; not because some tyrant compels him, or because some policeman stands over him with a club and will dash his brains out if he refuses to believe, but because unless he does so life would have little meaning. He must believe in God because only so can he ex-

plain the mystery of life, and unless that mystery is explained life cannot be lived decently. When a man accepts God without waiting for proof from the philosophers, he finds from his own experience that that belief affects his life and that for him it is as true as anything else in the world. He makes an adventure of faith which cannot be disproved by philosophy or by science, and he finds proof for his faith in the sense of exaltation and dignity which comes to him and the new and better light in which he sees his fellows.

Let us suppose for a moment that there is no God. (There are people who believe that there is no God, but it is just as difficult to prove that there is no God as it is to prove that there is one.) What difference would that view make to my life or to your life? If there is no God, then why does the earth exist? How long will it last? When will it be smashed to smithereens? If there is no God, then what is man — as one atheist put it — but an accident, the result of the blowing of wind upon mud? If that is all man is, what can be expected of him? What can we expect of a mixture of mud and wind? Can it be kind, high-minded, righteous? Can it paint pictures, compose music, write poetry, cherish freedom? Who ever heard of mud and wind thinking, talking, loving, aspiring? If there is no God, how can we explain man? That is why most atheistic thinkers — there are not many of them — paint a dismal picture of the world and have little hope for mankind and the work of the race and the future of civilization.

There are people who say, " There may be a God, but I have never received proof of his existence. Therefore I shall suspend my decision and merely say that I do not know whether God exists." These are the agnostics. Whatever appeal their position might have, it does not foster life. Life does not allow human beings to suspend their judgment. To live is to act and in acting you make a decision. The mother must act when her child is ill if she would save

its life. The individual must act; if he did nothing he would thus destroy himself. Doubt is not a philosophy or a way of life; it is stagnation. It leads to inaction and so to death.

Logically, agnosticism should lead to stagnation, but agnostics have not always been logical. Some of them have lived noble lives. Buddha is an excellent example. He was an agnostic, yet he lived a heroic life and has inspired multitudes to noble conduct. But it is significant that Buddha's followers, while they accepted his ethics, rejected his theology — or his lack of it. They deified him and today worship him as God.

One who believes in God says: "I know that there is a purpose to life. I know that there is meaning to this earth. I know that there is significance to history. God has put that purpose in the universe. History reveals the unfolding plan of God." Such a man has confidence in the universe, and above all in himself and in his fellow men. God is his source of strength. God is his rock and his refuge. God refreshes him and never lets him grow weary. God inspires him and gives him courage and the will to do justly and to love mercy. It makes all the difference in the world to life whether you believe that it has meaning or that it has none, whether you believe that there is a God or that there is none. Religion is the enthusiasm for life. Religion is the flame of life, the beauty of life, the fortress of life.

Man in Prophetic Religion

What is man? We are continually surrounded by other men — our families and relatives, our neighbors, our fellow citizens and fellow countrymen, the people of other lands. We must live with them. We are not Robinson Crusoes living each on an island by himself. Therefore it is essential to know what men are like. Our actions toward them will be determined by what we think they are like. If

we think that man is nothing but " a bit of unicellular matter on its way to becoming manure," as one American author put it; if we think that man is nothing but dust that returns to dust, nothing but the water and chemicals that compose his body, then we cannot become greatly excited over him. What difference does it make to me what happens to a little water and calcium? But if such is my attitude, my relationships with my fellow men are not going to be decent or fair or just, for my relationships are determined by what I believe. We vote for a man to be mayor of our city or president of our country because we think a great deal of him. Our confidence in him determines our vote, and our confidence does not depend on his chemistry.

Judaism teaches that man is made in the image of God and can strive after the perfection of God. It teaches that God created man to have dominion over all living things, to rule the earth and to develop his finest powers. Some teachers of Judaism have seen in man two natures, animal and spiritual, which battle within him. If the animal triumphs man becomes evil; if the spiritual triumphs he becomes good. Others have taught that when God created man, he created him perfect. Then Adam ate of the forbidden fruit and thus corrupted humanity. Since all men are Adam's children they are all equally corrupt and doomed to sinfulness and failure. This view is based on the story of Adam and Eve in the Book of Genesis. It has been builded into an important theology by certain sections of the Christian church. But it never became dominant in Judaism.

Judaism sees man as a child of God. It regards as of equal importance his physical and spiritual sides, for it knows that these affect each other. It knows that a well man is apt to be more enthusiastic than a sick one, that a man in a happy frame of mind is apt to be healthier than one who is downcast. The body and the soul are closely linked together. Judaism does not look down with contempt upon

the physical side of man. It recognizes that to meet the wants of the body is important, and that feeding the appetites is part of the will of God, who gave men appetites that the race might live and sustain itself. But man is more than body. The Hebrew word for life, *chayim,* actually means two lives, the spiritual and the physical. Man cannot live without bread, but man cannot live by bread alone. Judaism looks upon human personality as made up of physical and spiritual aspects, the satisfaction of both of which is essential to wholesome and full living. It believes that man can achieve harmony within himself and harmony with God. It holds up for man the middle road and advocates neither the starving of the body to glorify the spirit nor the silencing of the soul and worship of the body. It sees man as both perishable clay and imperishable soul, and insists that he can achieve a blending of the two. It believes that every life is precious in the sight of God, that every human being has a mission to perform and a task to fulfill. It believes in man because it believes in God.

Sometimes people are heard to remark, " I do not believe in God. My religion is doing good." Such people fail to realize that the desire to do good is likely to break down in a crisis. If we deny that there is a God we are apt to deny the value of human beings. If, for example, I am an employer and do not pay my employees adequately, then I am using my fellow men — or rather abusing them. But in doing that I offend God and disobey his will or even deny him. The basis of decent relationships with my fellow man is the fact that I believe him to be a child of God and therefore of infinite and eternal worth. I do good because of my religious convictions, which make me see every man as but " little lower than the angels." When I am unkind, cruel, avaricious, selfish, I deny my faith in God because I deny my faith in my fellow man.

What about a criminal, a derelict, an outcast, a failure — all those who in the old religious language were called sin-

ners? Judaism teaches that no human being needs to remain estranged from God. A thief who by his violation of a just law has made difficult men's living together has violated the law of God, but God does not desire to destroy him or to punish him in a burst of fury. God seeks only to stimulate the thief to become as perfect as he can. Judaism teaches that no human being is bad beyond the hope of redemption. No matter how often a man may have sinned, no matter how many crimes he may have committed, God will still forgive him, which means that it is still possible for him to cease being a failure and to become triumphant. God forsakes no one. Every human being can redeem himself.

In order to bring this teaching clearly before the people, Judaism instituted a majestic holy season during which men are invited to purify themselves and thus become reinstated in the sight of God. This is a period of penitence and prayer, commencing with the New Year and continuing for ten days until the Day of Atonement. According to an old tradition, on the New Year the Book of Judgment was opened. In it were written the names of all men. Those who had lived righteous lives were inscribed in the book of life, those who had led wicked lives in the book of death. Those whose lives had been a mixture of goodness and wickedness were written in the book of the doubtful, and almost all men were in that category. These doubtful ones were given ten days for prayer and repentance. On the tenth day, God judged whether the repentance had been sincere or not, whether the doubtful ones might be written into the book of the living. Throughout the ten days of this holy season the dominant thought is repentance, prayer and good deeds. Repentance means a return to God; prayer means a continued consciousness of God; and the result of these two will be good deeds. These are available to every human being, and thus all men can be forgiven and made fit again for life.

Because Judaism believes in the decency, the goodness, the justice of man, it believes in humanity. It believes that an ordered world is possible. It believes that poverty can be abolished, that war can be made to disappear, that violence and hatred can be eliminated. It believes that the noblest dreams which the noblest men have for all human beings can and will some day be realized.

The Bible — The Sacred Literature of Prophetic Religion

The word "Bible" comes from the Greek *ta biblia,* which means "the books." The Bible is "the books" of the ancient Hebrew people, their literature or library. No one library contains all the books of any people, and the Bible does not contain all the books of the ancient Hebrews. Some of their literature was not worth preserving, some was kept out of the Bible by its editors for other reasons, some was lost.

When Jews speak of the Bible they mean what Christians call the Old Testament. They do not accept the New Testament as part of their sacred literature, even though most of it was written by Jews. This does not mean that they reject the ideas of the New Testament. Some of the religious ideas of the New Testament — the finest ones, in my judgment — are taken from the Old Testament. But Jews do not like the name "Old Testament," because it suggests that one Testament was worn out and had to be replaced, like an old dress. They do not believe that the ideas of the Old Testament are inadequate as a religious philosophy, nor do they think that any existing sacred literature embodies a more adequate and more complete religion than that of the Old Testament. Nevertheless, in this book I have conformed to common usage and employed the terms "Old Testament" and "New Testament" to distinguish the Bible of the synagogue from the Bible of the church.

The Bible — which means the "Old Testament," the

Jewish Bible — contains thirty-nine books, divided into three categories, as follows:

Part I — The Torah, consisting of the first five books: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy.

Part II — The Prophets: Joshua, Judges, I Samuel, II Samuel, I Kings, II Kings, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi.

Part III — The Writings: Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Songs, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, I Chronicles, II Chronicles.

Sometimes the Bible is said to contain only twenty-five books, because the twelve minor prophets are counted as one book, and Samuel, Kings and Chronicles as one instead of two books each.

For Judaism the Torah was the most important part of the Bible. This does not imply that the influence of the prophets was weak. As we have seen, the Torah was written as a result of the teachings of the prophets and reveals their religious philosophy, their concept of God and man and of man's relations to his fellows. The Torah was frequently read in public places. During a year, it was read *in toto* at least once in every synagogue, being divided for this purpose into sections of which one was read each week. Thus the faithful synagogue-goer heard all of the Torah at least once a year. Invariably in the synagogue service, after the Torah reading some verses from the prophets were read. The Book of Psalms was very popular in Jewish life, and many of its poems found their way into the daily prayers. In fact the greater part of the prayers in modern synagogues consists of a repetition of the noblest psalms.

To this day, the Bible remains the great source book of the Jewish faith. To read it is a privilege, an obligation and a responsibility. It is the great Jewish classic, and any Jewish renaissance or revival must be rooted in its pages. At one time it was believed that every word of the Bible was

of equal importance and validity because every word came from God. In preceding pages it has been demonstrated that as a result of the newer studies this view can no longer be held. The Bible is the work of men — great men who wanted to give their people a universal ideal, an appreciation of the sacredness of human life and of the duty to spread the knowledge of the one God of love and justice. They conceived of the Bible as a missionary library to be used in winning all mankind over from paganism to Judaism, from crude polytheism to ethical monotheism. To achieve their purpose they eliminated some of the old literature. They changed portions of it, for they saw that no religion could be poured into one rigid framework. They even allowed for differences of interpretations within the structure of faith.

These men succeeded in making their ideas known to all mankind. No other book has been translated into as many languages as the Bible. Its first few translations into Aramaic and Greek were made by Jews. The Greek version especially had tremendous influence. With very few exceptions, such as that of the Jewish Publication Society, all the later translations were made by Christian scholars, who thus became the instruments whereby the ideals of Judaism were disseminated. Through Christian zeal and Christian sacrifice the Bible has been read in every known tongue, and the history of the ancient Hebrews as conceived by the religious geniuses who edited the Bible has influenced the lives of men and women in many times and places. No one can deny that the Bible is the most important book in the whole of literature. Other peoples have their sacred books which set forth noble philosophies and lofty ideals, but none has influenced as many human beings as has the Bible. For out of it have come three great religions — Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism.

Being the work of men, the Bible contains inaccuracies and imperfections. Human judgment and intelligence

must sift out its errors and determine which of its values are temporary and which are eternal. How can a criterion be found? How shall it be decided what in the Bible is of lasting value and what is not? As to that, there can be little difficulty. All will readily agree that laws of ritual are not as important as laws of love and justice, that dietary regulations are of less weight than the belief in one God. It is safe to say that those things in the Bible are truest, are eternal and enduring, upon which the greatest prophets have agreed and which find a ready response in the souls of upright and high-minded men in this age as in other ages. No one can doubt that Isaiah's prophecies are more significant than Ezekiel's, and the nineteenth chapter of the Book of Leviticus than the chapters dealing with priestly vestments and the sprinkling of the blood of sacrificial animals.

From this point of view, the Bible remains a source of inspiration and exaltation, a well of living waters. Those parts which are no longer considered binding are nevertheless important because they represent the religious views of profoundly religious men and reveal critical stages in the development of religion. The fundamental spirit of ethical monotheism remains and abides. The Bible is the soul of the synagogue, and its sacred place in the edifice of Judaism cannot be disturbed.

The Miracles of the Bible

When a well known agnostic sought to discredit the religion of the Bible he tried to demonstrate the impossibility and absurdity of some of the biblical miracles — for example, that the Red Sea was split in two so that the Hebrews might pass through on their flight from Pharaoh, or that the sun stood still during a battle between the Hebrews and their enemies. Pious religionists have gone to equally absurd extremes in the attempt to uphold these miracles and prove them scientifically possible. Why do miracles create a problem? What indeed is a miracle?

Life is possible only because it is based on law. How do we know what to eat? Because we have learned to some extent the laws of nutrition and know that the body will absorb certain matter and turn it into tissues and energy. If the body absorbed milk one day and rusty nails the next, how could we plan for a food supply? If one day an automobile ran by gasoline and the next by muddy water, how could we know what to put into the tank? So with the seasons. If July were hot one year and freezing the next, how could farmers plant anything and expect a crop? Because the seasons are regular, objects always fall to the earth and waters run to the lowest levels, because man's digestive system works always in a certain way, life is possible. It rests on the laws of nature. A miracle is a suspension of the laws of nature or a violation of them. In the history of Jewish thought, four attitudes have developed toward the miracles of the Bible.

1. Some Jews have believed that God, since he is the author of the laws of nature, can suspend them when he wishes. They said that when God wanted Moses to perform certain miracles before Pharaoh, he issued an order so that Moses could turn all the waters of Egypt into blood. They said that a powerful God can do anything he wants to do at any time he pleases. Therefore, they said, the miracles of the Bible actually occurred and are accurately described. Whenever God pleases he can bring about more such miracles. This is a logical and understandable though naïve position.

2. Many Jewish thinkers however could not accept this explanation. They too believed that the biblical miracles occurred as described — that the sun stood still, that Elijah brought a dead child back to life — but they were not ready to subscribe to the idea that God suspends the laws of nature at his pleasure. They did not like to think of God as being so capricious. Therefore they taught that when God created the universe and laid down the unchangeable laws

by which nature works, he provided for a number of exceptions, and these exceptions are the miracles of the Bible. Henceforth no miracles will occur unless God in his wisdom has already provided for them.

3. A third group of students held that, while the biblical miracles happened as described, a fuller understanding of them would show that they did not involve a suspension of the laws of nature. Thus they would say that Elijah did not restore a dead child to life, but by the proper use of forced respiration merely restored breath to a body from which life had all but fled. They would say that Jonah was actually swallowed by a whale and would try to prove that there are on record other cases of whales' having swallowed human beings and later spewed them forth alive. They would point out that when the Red Sea was split in two, it merely happened that a violent wind — which is not unknown — blew upon the water and left enough dry land for the Hebrews to wade through. When they reached the other shore, the storm subsided and thus the Egyptians were drowned. In other words, this group insists that the miracles of the Bible are historical events which really happened in accordance with and not in violation of the laws of nature.

4. The most modern group of Jewish thinkers recognizes that the miracles of the Bible have no historical basis. They simply did not occur. The men who wrote the Bible, these thinkers declare, used the myths and legends of the ancient world which were popular among the Hebrews as vehicles for religious truths. In the case of the dividing of the Red Sea, for example, the Bible writers were concerned to tell men vividly and effectively that God is on the side of liberty and justice and eventually will put an end to tyranny. Proponents of this fourth view recognize that the laws of nature are the will of God and as immutable as the laws of justice, and that it is unimportant to religion to prove that the miracles occurred. Many of the biblical

miracles are found in the literatures of other ancient peoples. For us the only significance of these tales lies in the fact that Hebrew teachers used them to convey religious truths.

Prayer

A very earnest little girl once informed me that she was greatly upset. She had been led to believe in the value and power of prayer and had been told that God answers prayer, especially the prayers of the good and prayers of generosity. Among her acquaintances was a sufferer afflicted with a seemingly incurable disease. For a whole month she had fervently appealed to God to restore the health of this stricken friend, whose pain she felt was undeserved. Her friend's condition remained unchanged, and the youngster's faith in God and in the power of prayer was shaken. She could not understand why God did not answer her prayer. It seemed to meet all the conditions of a prayer which should be answered.

Many people reared under religious influence have had difficulties similar to those of this child. Finding many of their prayers unanswered they have carried on a sort of private feud with God. Beneath this attitude is a very simple and primitive philosophy of prayer. It assumes that God is all-powerful and can perform miracles at any time, that he will suspend the laws of nature on the sincere request of devout worshipers and is always prepared to come to the material aid of his friends. The English word "prayer" comes from the Latin *precare,* "to beg." The worshiper is the beggar, beseeching Almighty God for favors. By prayer he hopes to influence God and induce him either to alter his decisions or to accelerate his plans. Such individuals, as a great Christian preacher put it, "hope to make a messenger boy of God," who will do the work they themselves cannot do.

If God is to have any value for man, man must make use

of him. Merely to say that one knows that God exists and then proceed to live without reference to him is, of course, failing to make use of God and denying oneself whatever good and strength religion imparts. However, the best way to make use of God is not to expect him to do what one asks, as that youngster did. Men can best make use of God not by trying to influence him or telling him what to do, but by letting God influence *them* and tell *them* what to do. If God were to answer all human prayers he would become merely a shadow or reflection of human wishes. The object of religion is not to persuade God to carry out man's will, but to induce man to carry out God's will. Prayer is powerful and helpful in so far as it brings the influence of God to bear upon the life of man — not to make God more manlike, but to make man more Godlike; not to bring God from heaven to earth, but to bring man from earth to heaven.

The Hebrew word for prayer can almost be translated "to humble oneself." To pray is to become humble in the presence of God, to submit to the will of God, to be moved by the mind of God, to be conscious of the presence and reality of God; to pray is to meet with God. Among the prayers of the synagogue, which have been tried and tested for centuries, there are few that ask favors of God. Most of them remind men of the nature of God — of his glory and power, of his justice and love. The best known prayer of Judaism is "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one." This prayer makes no request of God. It only affirms that God is one. Its recital is not needed by God; he does not need to be reminded that he is one. It is needed by man; man must be reminded that God is one. Man must be reminded that only God is to be worshiped, else he might worship idols or power or wealth or prestige or the other false gods which easily claim him today as three thousand years ago. To worship something means to give everything one possesses, all one's talents and energies, to this end. The man who worships power may sacrifice his

honor for power, may neglect his family for power, may destroy his character for power. It is therefore exceedingly important that daily, even thrice daily, people recite the Shema, that they may be reminded that there is but one God in the universe to whom man should dedicate everything he possesses.

To recite the Shema means not only to be reminded of the God whom alone men ought to worship; it is also to remind oneself that even as God is one, so mankind is one. One Father in heaven for *all* the children of men, one Creator who implanted his divinity in every human being — that is the meaning of the Shema. How important that reminder is to the average man, who is all too ready to yield to hatred and prejudice, to take advantage of his fellows and use his neighbor to advance his own purposes! The Jew who recites the Shema and is conscious of its tremendous meaning will enjoy the benefit and the blessing of prayer. Reciting the Shema is said to be assuming the yoke of the kingdom of heaven. It is the Jewish oath of allegiance to the kingdom of God.

Prayers of praise are also common in the prayer book — "Praise ye the Lord who deserves to be praised"; "Extolled and hallowed be the name of God." Why should God be praised? Is he like an arrogant monarch or a vain tyrant who needs flattery? This idea assumes that to praise God is to benefit him. Nothing could be more mistaken. To praise God is to exalt man. When you see a beautiful sunset envelop the sky in a mass of radiant colors, involuntarily you cry out, "How glorious! How wonderful!" and such expressions satisfy and tranquilize. Even so puny man, standing in the presence of God — the Eternal, the Just, the Merciful, the Forgiving — cannot withhold his praise. To voice such praise is good for the soul.

Prayers of thanksgiving likewise are frequent in synagogue ritual.

O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,
For His mercy endureth forever.

Here is the gratitude man feels for life and for nature, for the day and its work, for the night and its rest, for all the opportunities that surround him. As I write the rays of the sun penetrate my room. The sun is ninety-three million miles away from the earth. If it were closer it would become a consuming flame. That source of light without which there could be no life would in case of a slight celestial disturbance become the destroyer of man. Who created the sun? Who placed it so that its warmth and its golden light would quicken life? Who but God, the creator of this and the thousand other glories of nature that make life possible! Think of the human body and its many marvelous organs working together with amazing precision — lungs and veins, arteries and heart, brain, eyes and ears, hands and feet. Conscious of all these marvels, man must speak forth his gratitude to their Creator.

But the person who is aware of God is always filled with thanksgiving. He is grateful not merely when some extraordinary achievement crowns his efforts or unusual good fortune befalls him, but even for life's sorrows. Centuries ago a group of persecuted Jews on the hillsides of Spain exemplified this high religious mood. The decree of banishment from Spain had fallen upon them because they refused to surrender their right to worship God in accordance with the teachings of Judaism, and they were on their way to other lands. As they encamped at night on the heights overlooking the city and the nation to whose glory they had contributed, and which had responded by making them beggars and outcasts, they voiced the prayer, " With great love hast Thou loved us, O God." In their bitter tribulation they were yet aware of God's love for them and of the blessing he showered upon them even in their tragedy.

Tradition tells of a group of Jews who were surrounded by a mob which demanded that they surrender their faith or die. They chose to die. With their last breath they exclaimed,

> O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good,
> For His mercy endureth forever.

Even in their martyrdom they praised God for what he is.

Too frequently when people think of prayer they think selfishly and materially, and thus they destroy the power of prayer. The effect of prayer is quietness and confidence and inner peace. The fruit of prayer is to be seen in the spirit of man. Prayer cannot mend a broken bridge, rebuild a ruined city or bring water to parched fields. Prayer can mend a broken heart, lift up a discouraged soul and strengthen a weakened will. Prayer can give hope to the despairing, rout loneliness, melancholy, and a sense of worthlessness and defeat. Prayer is victory. It is man meeting God, and when man meets God he rises above the petty claims of routine living. He is healed of the trivial worries that fret and embitter his days. He sees the great purpose of the universe and becomes aware of his mission in life. He finds that in trying to realize this mission he has support in God, the most powerful force in the universe, and so he works with a new will and an invincible spirit.

Through prayer one is reminded regularly of the great ideals of humanity. Among the daily morning prayers of the synagogue is this: " Grant us peace, Thy most precious gift, O Thou Eternal Source of Peace, and enable Israel to be a messenger of peace unto the peoples of the earth." In an age of war it is good to be reminded of this goal of peace and to remember that not war but peace is the will of God. The man who sincerely utters this prayer will never yield to the philosophy that wars are inevitable. It will energize him to strive for peace and will keep alive in his soul the hope of peace.

The prayers of the synagogue include one for the government, for the President and his advisers and for those who guard the liberties of our land. It reminds one of the duties of citizenship — the duty to obey the law and to change the law that needs changing, the obligation to strive for freedom and democracy and to be prepared to make sacrifices for the common good. Prayers of this kind teach the worshiper to be just, cooperative, peace-loving and self-sacrificing, and affirm his loyalty to the great goals of humanity, which have been laid down by God himself.

Prayer may serve to cleanse the soul. It is obvious that we are influenced by our companions. We hear their talk, we observe their actions, and our character is formed by our associations with them. Through prayer man makes a companion of God, and what an effect such companionship is bound to have on his character! You cannot be petty long when you meet with God. You cannot be unjust long when you are aware of his just nature. You cannot seek vengeance long when you know his forgiving spirit. You cannot be mean long when you sense his bigness. You cannot be contemptuous of others long when you realize that he is the Father of all men in all times and places. Prayer purifies and ennobles the soul.

Not to pray is to deny oneself the privileges and benefits of religion, for prayer is indeed the heart, the drive of religion. Not to pray is almost to forget that God exists and to live without his strength, power and majesty. Let me tell you a few stories — true stories — to illustrate some of the ideas I have been trying to express.

Some years ago I visited a distinguished London Jewess, the Honorable Lily Montagu, daughter of Lord Swaythling. Her father, an exceedingly successful man, had been very strict in observing the old practices. She had discovered that his religious views no longer moved her, and so she had become the founder of a liberal Jewish congregation. Disturbed and distressed by what he thought was her loss of

faith, the father disowned his daughter. She braved his wrath and continued to practice her new interpretation of Judaism. She organized a settlement for poor girls and became a personal friend to more than a thousand girls whom she helped, guided, advised, and served in a hundred capacities. Subsequently her father relented and gave her of his ample means that her work might go on.

I saw her in her settlement house. I marveled at her spirit. I asked her what she was accomplishing. She said: "The poverty in London is appalling. The problems it creates are huge. The little work that I do here is barely a scratch on the surface. I am discouraged at times. I wonder whether my efforts are of any use, whether poverty can be conquered and the evils it breeds can be overcome. When this mood of defeat and discouragement assails me I take my prayer book from its shelf and pray. I meet God face to face. I know that he is on the side of those who strive to overcome poverty, and I know that he is on my side. I cannot lose. I must and shall win. When I thus stand in the presence of God I know that my work is not in vain, and that somehow or other it is within the power of decent men to overcome these social evils. God gives me courage and renews my vision so that I can carry on with enthusiasm and confidence."

A rabbi in a large metropolitan center, just as he was preparing to leave his study one day, was called to the telephone. A woman informed him that her husband was critically ill and that he had mentioned the rabbi's name; and she wondered, although both her husband and she were strangers to the rabbi, whether he would not come to visit them. The rabbi, recognizing the urgency of that request, canceled his other engagements and sped to the home of these strangers. There he was greeted by a cultivated Christian lady, who said to him:

"I must tell you my husband's story, and then you will decide whether you will go in to him. He was born of Jew-

ish parents in London. His parents were careful to observe the minute prescriptions of their religion and insisted that he do likewise. The boy became resentful and rebellious. One day when he was in his teens he stole away from home and became a sailor. As he boarded ship for his first cruise he made a vow never again, to his knowledge, to have any dealings with Jews, never to eat at the same table with Jews, never to be in a room where Jews were present, never to speak to a Jew, never to buy from a Jew. The years passed. He settled in the United States. Fifty years ago we were married. He told me of his vow and I agreed to help him keep it. For all the fifty years of our married life we have had no contact with any Jew.

"Now," the lady continued, "my husband is on his deathbed. He is suffering acutely and may pass away at any moment. His physician however has been amazed at his remarkable vitality, and feels that something is troubling him which prevents him from finding eternal peace. To my astonishment the doctor informed me that my husband had mentioned your name, and had asked to see you. He thinks that whatever is troubling my husband, you, rabbi, might be able to cure it.

"Now you know our story. If you want to go in to my husband, who has abjured the faith of the synagogue all his life, I shall be very grateful."

The rabbi entered the room where the dying man lay. He looked up and asked, "You are Rabbi ———?" The rabbi nodded. "I am glad you have come," the man said. "I know that my end is near. I want to die, but I cannot die without saying a prayer I learned from my parents and which I have forgotten. They said it was always recited by a dying Jew. I thought perhaps you would know the prayer and perhaps if I say it after you I will be able to leave this world in peace."

The rabbi at once thought of the Shema and quietly recited the Hebrew words. Recognition flashed over the dy-

ing man's features. " That is the prayer! Say it slowly, please, please, that I may repeat it." The rabbi did so — one word, then another, echoed by the dying man. As he pronounced the last word of the Shema, " God is One," a look of peace came over his face and he fell back dead.

Here is concrete evidence of the power of prayer. A prayer learned in childhood gave that man courage and peace and made him ready to face the unknown.

One day while I was visiting in the Jewish hospital a nurse accosted me and asked me to hurry to a room on another floor where, she said, a rabbi was urgently needed. The patient had been driving home from California with his wife to celebrate the Passover with his family. His auto had been wrecked and his wife killed, and he had been brought unconscious to the hospital. His children hastened to him from a near-by city. He was just regaining consciousness and was soon to be told that his wife, who, when he last remembered, was sitting by his side, was dead. His family hoped that the presence of a rabbi at that moment would help the man stand the shock.

Entering the sickroom, I saw at once that he had been told the tragic news. He turned to me and said, " Rabbi, why did God do this to me? " Then quickly he added, " Blessed be the righteous Judge! " He was crushed by the death of his wife. For a moment he was embittered and ready to turn against God. Then he remembered the old prayer, and it came to his lips and saved him from bitterness, from loss of faith, from hatred that corrodes and destroys. It enabled him to bear his suffering heroically and with dignity.

On another occasion I walked into the sickroom of a lady whom I knew well. The patient was surprised to see me; she did not know that I was aware of her illness. I was shocked when I saw her, but tried to conceal my feelings lest I discourage her. She said, " I am just wearing away." So it seemed to me. She was pale and thin, a ghost of her

former self. Tears came to her eyes as she whispered, " I just cannot eat any food. For a week now, I have not been able to taste a morsel. I want to, but I just cannot." She began to cry and between her sobs broke out into denunciation of herself. " My life is a failure. I am a failure as a wife, as a mother, as a friend, as a citizen of my country, also as a member of your congregation." She was not a failure. She was an accepted member of the community, even a leader in some activities. She was well liked and appreciated.

While I was thus reassuring her a nurse came in with a tray of food and expressed the hope that the patient would eat something. She said to me: " They are wasting their food. I just cannot eat it." I asked her if she would like to have me bless her. She nodded, and I placed my hands upon her forehead and recited in Hebrew the threefold priestly blessing: " May the Lord bless thee and keep thee. May the Lord let his countenance shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee. May the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace." She thanked me sweetly and without another word proceeded to eat the food that had been placed before her.

In all these examples the effect of prayer was immediate and dramatic. Prayer *is* dramatic.

Some critics, seeing that prayer does give men peace, have deprecated its value for that very reason. They say it leaves people too tranquil and satisfied and keeps them from doing things. Here again is failure to appreciate the power of prayer. An excellent example of the fact that prayer produces action is to be found in the life of Moses. As an infant he had been adopted by an Egyptian princess and educated at the royal court. He had seen the injustices done by the rulers of Egypt to Hebrew slaves. He identified himself with the slaves and was compelled to flee to the desert, a penniless wanderer. He married the daughter of a desert chieftain, re-established himself and found security and

happiness again. But then he had an experience. Let the Bible describe it:

> And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said: 'I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt.' And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said: 'Moses, Moses.' And he said: 'Here am I.' And He said: 'Draw not nigh hither; put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.' Moreover He said: 'I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God. (Exod. 3:2–6)

Moses met God; that is to say, Moses prayed. As a result of this experience he left his comfortable home and went back to Egypt to demand the freedom of the Hebrew slaves. Prayer reminded him of the unfinished task in Egypt. Prayer led him to action — to liberate the prisoners and strive for justice. Prayer gave Moses peace of soul, and it also gave him power and drove him to accomplish things for his fellow men.

So important is prayer to religion that most religions have recognized that it dare not be left to chance. Religion dare not permit a man to say that he will pray when he feels like it. He may never feel like it. The less he prays, the less he will feel the need for prayer. The synagogue, the pioneer in prayer, established three regular prayer periods daily. It insisted that men drop everything they were doing, and thrice daily remind themselves that there is one God in the universe who is loving and just and desires that man imitate him. And thrice daily the Jew dropped his business cares, stopped in his pursuit of a career or whatever he may have been doing, to remind himself that God is the supreme fact of life. Whenever this prayer discipline prevails among Jews, they are strong, courageous and unafraid, prepared

for suffering, persecution, exile, even death. When they neglect such prayer, they are terrified, panic-stricken; they tremble and lose their courage and dignity.

Some years ago, on a warm summer evening, I wandered with a companion into a small Chassidic synagogue in eastern Poland. (The Chassidim are a Jewish sect who are in revolt against the rationalism of the rabbis and have developed a worship ritual of song and dance.) The synagogue was housed in a small, narrow room. I had come to participate in the Sabbath worship. As I entered I saw a bearded old grandfather sitting on a bench with his grandson next to him. They were reading from the Bible, and the grandfather listened as the boy explained to him the meaning of the will of God. As twilight deepened, the synagogue began to fill up. The atmosphere in that poorly ventilated room became close. My companion wanted to leave, but I was determined to stay for the service. The worshipers kept on coming. They were poor, the poorest of the poor. Their clothes were ragged and their faces wan and anemic. They looked like men beaten mercilessly by life and crushed by a cruel fate. Their seeming forlornness depressed me.

It was announced that the first star had been seen, and the hour for the service was at hand. Following their leader, the congregants began to chant. " Let us go forth," they sang, " to meet the Sabbath queen." Something about the song roused and stirred them. They seemed to shed their tattered garments, their look of defeat, their woes and aches. They were no longer paupers, madly scrambling for a dry crust of bread. They were princes, wearing the royal purple, going out to meet the Sabbath queen sent by God.

As the service went on, this shabby little synagogue seemed transformed into a majestic shrine. The worshipers lost themselves in their prayer. The weariness of the world departed from their spirits, their dejection faded and confidence and hope took its place. Even a physical transformation was evident. Their stooped backs straightened, their

cheeks became flushed as if new blood were flowing from their hearts. They had come face to face with God.

Looking at these humble Jews, forlorn and forgotten by a world of wealth and power, I understood why Jewry, hugging its prayer book, has been able to defy the legions of the Caesars and the power of tyrants for century after century. Here was the invincibility of faith. When men fear God, they fear no man. When men have ceased to fear God, they fear every man. Prayer conquers fear and gives assurance that justice will be established; that not by power or deceit, but by the spirit of God, do men prevail.

Immortality

Not infrequently in the United States, Indian mounds have been discovered where chieftains had been buried. These mounds are much larger than would be required by a human body. In them were found remains of the chieftain's horse, his spear, his tomahawk, his bow and arrows — evidence of the Indians' belief that in the future life the chieftain would need the weapons he had used in this life.

Occasionally a news dispatch comes out of British India bringing the information that an Indian widow has violated the British law against suttee and flung herself upon the funeral pyre where her husband's body was being cremated. For many centuries, devout Hindu women ascended the funeral pyre of their husband to be burned with the corpse, so that they might accompany their husbands into the world of death and minister to them there as they had served them here. The Hindus believed that man lived on after death and that life in the hereafter was in some respects the same as life here and now.

Among many Hindus the belief was prevalent that after death the body was destroyed, but the soul lived on and entered the body of that kind of animal which most closely resembled the nature of the man in whose body it had dwelt. The soul of a cruel dictator might enter the body of

a ferocious tiger. The soul of a sneaky traitor might enter the body of a venomous snake. The soul of a greedy person might enter the body of a swine. This belief is known as transmigration. The soul had to wander on, inhabiting bodies suitable to its state until it had been cleansed of all impurities and was prepared to become part of the universal spirit.

In Egypt, I once visited the Grand Pyramid, pictures of which are familiar to all. This pyramid served as a tomb for the king and queen. The chambers in which the royal bodies reposed were nearest the summit, the body of the king resting in the topmost room and that of the queen in the one just below it. Thousands of slaves gave their lives to drag these huge granite stones into the desert to build this burial place for their master. Why did the Pharaohs, many of whom were able and intelligent rulers, waste so much energy in building their tombs? Because Egyptians believed that not merely the soul, but also the body, lived on after death. Many Egyptians strove to amass enough wealth so that they could endow their own tombs and arrange that food and drink be brought there regularly. Cruel Egyptian kings, fearing that the masses of their people, who hated them, would raid their graves and destroy their bodies, built these massive pyramids, entrance into which was difficult and ascent up which was even more difficult. Thus they hoped that their bodies would be safe from destruction.

In Persia, the bodies of the dead were put in high places to be devoured by vultures, so that no corpse might pollute the earth. In other countries, the burial of a corpse was considered a sacred service rendered to the departed, and the dearest of friends thought it a privilege to fling the first handful of earth upon the casket.

All these examples illustrate the variety of religious practice that has grown up in connection with death and the dead. Death is the universal experience of the human race

and also one of its great mysteries. Around all profound experiences men have built elaborate and significant ceremonies. All human beings have speculated over the meaning of death. Most of them have come to the conclusion that there is some form of afterlife. Some have believed that the soul lives on, others that both soul and body live on. In Judaism, for a time, there was a belief both in the eternity and immortality of the soul and in the eternity of the body.

The Bible, the source book of the Jewish religion, contains hardly any reference to the belief in the immortality of the soul. This is not because the biblical editors did not speculate as to what happens after death, but rather because the prophets were concerned with this life, with remedying its injustices and overcoming its evils, with abolishing war and enabling every man to sit under his vine and fig tree so that none would be afraid. They were silent about the future life. They dealt with challenges that were more important for their age. They probably observed that other religious groups devoted all their energies to the future life and neglected this. They wanted religion to focus its major energies on improving this world and the life of men upon it. Here and there in the Bible we get hints as to what people believed concerning the hereafter. There are references to abodes of the shades and the hidden spirits, but these are few and insignificant.

Not for long, however, could a great faith remain insensitive to the hunger of its people and the logic of its own teachings by ignoring the eternal question, What happens to man after death? Its answer was that the soul, which was made in the image of God, was immortal and indestructible. Judaism sometimes spoke of a hell where souls were purified before they could be reunited with God. Alongside the belief in the immortality of the soul there grew up a belief in the immortality of the body. This latter found expression in what for some Jews became a fundamental

doctrine; namely, the resurrection of the body — that after death the body rises from the grave to a new life. Because this view was widely held, synagogue tradition until recent years was bitterly opposed to cremation and even to embalming, which were held to destroy or impair the body and thus make its resurrection impossible.

The idea of the resurrection of the dead is in keeping with the strong spirit of justice fostered by prophetic religion. It seemed unjust that the righteous, who had obeyed God's will and had suffered and toiled to establish God's kingdom of goodness, never lived to see the realization of their dream. Therefore the belief arose that when God's kingdom was finally established, all the righteous throughout the ages who had sacrificed for it would rise from their graves to enjoy that nobler society they had helped build. In the articles of faith which he drew up for believing Jews, the philosopher Maimonides proclaimed this belief as a fundamental principle. To this day, large masses of Jews subscribe to the idea that bodies will come back to life and carry on in that far-off time when "the knowledge of God will cover the earth even as the waters cover the sea."

There are Jews however who cannot accept the belief in the resurrection of the body. They say in the words of the ancient teacher, "Be like servants who serve the master without hope of a reward." Serve God, do what is right, not for the sake of some compensation, but because to serve him and obey his will is the greatest of joys. These Jews know too that when the body is placed in the earth it is decomposed beyond any hope of restoration. Physical resurrection seems to be an impossibility unless the laws of nature are to be suspended. Therefore, when the Union Prayer Book was created by the Central Conference of American Rabbis for American Reform congregations, all prayers which referred to the resurrection of the dead were eliminated because these no longer were in keeping with

the advance of knowledge and with the faith of modern synagogue worshipers.

But, though they reject the belief in the resurrection of the dead, these Jews, and all Jews, believe in the immortality of the soul. An eloquent unbeliever once tried to prove that there is no soul. He said that if you weigh a body a moment before death and a moment after death, the scales will register the same weight. He intended by this crude illustration to convey the belief that there is no difference between a corpse and a living personality. There certainly is a difference between a human being who lives, feels, thinks and aspires, and a body that is still, rigid and motionless. But that difference is not a physical or material one. It is spiritual, invisible. Things that are invisible can nevertheless be real. A father who loves, a mother who serves are more than corpses. Men cannot describe the soul because the soul is more than flesh and more than mortality. It cannot be described by adjectives that are related to the senses. It cannot be seen, touched, weighed or heard. It is nevertheless real. Love cannot be seen, friendship cannot be heard, honesty cannot be weighed, but these abstract qualities are real. So too man is more than chemistry. The body is more than flesh and blood. In that body there is something divine, which is called the soul.

Where the soul goes after death is something about which man can meditate and ponder and about which he must have faith. The soul is part of God and that which is part of God returns to him. In God, the soul of man continues to live on.

The works of men live on after them. The prophets of Israel live on as they inspire men and women to the good life. Men who have built bridges live on in the product of their labor. Humble toilers who have dug out sewers have immortality in the increased health of a community. Teachers who have dispelled ignorance live on in the more enlightened ways of the generations that come after them.

Fathers live on in the increased nobility of the lives of their children. Mothers live on in the tenderness and mercy which they have demonstrated and have thus disseminated in the world. Musicians whose music pacifies and enraptures, poets whose words exalt and elevate, lawmakers whose decrees enrich living, statesmen whose treaties bind up wounds and advance peace — all have an immortality here. Whoever lives influences life for good or for evil, and that influence lives on forever.

But social immortality is not enough. Man cannot comprehend death. He can understand the breakdown of a body. He cannot understand how the soul which animated that body can be lost and disappear. Belief in the immortality of the soul comes out of the belief in the existence of God. God created man. God placed his divinity in man. That divinity is the soul, which returns to God and can never be destroyed.

The doctrine of the immortality of the soul is very important in religion. It makes a big difference to man whether he lives for a few years or forever. It makes a big difference to man to know that he is not a transient but a permanent part of the universe. Obligations cannot be dismissed so lightly when we know that we are immortal souls. Life becomes much more meaningful, actions much more important, ambitions much more weighty. What you do will be of significance not merely for one year or for seventy years, but to the end of time. Belief in the immortality of the soul gives dignity and depth and richness and fullness to life. What is man? Not a passing shadow, but a fragment of the Everlasting Spirit. So Judaism taught and teaches. The belief in the immortality of the soul grows out of the prophetic conception of God and man and out of the intuitions of the heart.

The Kaddish

Extolled and hallowed be the name of God throughout the world which He has created, and which He governs according to His righteous will. Just is He in all His ways, and wise are all His decrees. May His kingdom come, and His will be done in all the earth. Praised be the Lord of life, the righteous Judge for ever more. Whatsoever praise we would render unto God, howsoever we would adore the Most High, we would yet fail to give him the glory due to His great name.

Even in the hour of bereavement and sorrow, we feel the majesty of God and will give thanks for His manifold mercies. To the departed whom we now remember, may peace and bliss be granted in life eternal. May they find grace and mercy before the Lord of heaven and earth. May their souls rejoice in that ineffable good which God has laid up for those who fear Him, and may their memory be a blessing unto those who treasure it. May the Father of peace send peace to all who mourn and comfort all the bereaved among us.

(*Union Prayer Book,* p. 334)

This is the Kaddish, next to the Shema the best known prayer in the liturgy of the synagogue. It has become identified with the memory of the departed. It is recited at the open grave by the immediate relatives of the deceased. Orthodox Jewish mourners continue to recite it daily for eleven months less one day after the death of a dear one, and on the anniversary of the death. In the minds of most Jews, the Kaddish is a prayer for the dead. This, however, is what it is not. Originally the Kaddish made no reference whatsoever to the dead, nor was it composed with any intention of having it serve as a prayer in their memory.

Kaddish comes from the same root as the Hebrew word *kodosh,* " holy "; it means " sanctification." The Kaddish is a prayer of sanctification and praise of God, what is known in church ritual as a doxology. The original Kaddish consists of only the first paragraph given above. The second paragraph was added in recent times.

The Kaddish has a very interesting history. It was written in Aramaic, not in classic Hebrew, because the Jewish masses at that time had ceased to speak the tongue of the Torah. It was intended for recitation at the end of the day in the rabbinical academies. Here the rabbis would gather to study the Torah. They were not always in agreement; at times indeed there were violent differences of opinion and vigorous, even vehement, discussions, which may have given rise to hard feelings. It was of course unseemly that this should happen in an assemblage devoted to the study of God's word, but in the heat of debate men often lose control of their tongues. Therefore it was determined that at the close of a day of deliberation all present should be reminded that they had assembled in the name of God — not to uphold personal views or exercise intellectual domination over their fellows, but to glorify God and make his will effective among men.

Someone suggested that if it was meet to praise God at the end of a day of study it would also be meet to praise him when the life of a good man came to an end. This suggestion was happily received, but immediately a problem arose: how was it to be decided who was good and deserved to have the Kaddish recited in his honor, and who did not deserve it? It was a decision which no human being could make with justice, because no man's life is fully known to his fellows. To single out some individuals for this honor while others were unhonored went against the grain of Judaism, which was and is essentially a religion of democracy. So it became the custom to say the Kaddish at the close of every life.

But why is it recited daily for eleven months less one day after the death? To understand this custom it is necessary to trace a belief about the hereafter which was very popular in Jewish circles, though it never became a dominant part of Judaism. In the course of their history the Jews had come into contact with the civilization of Persia. The Per-

sian religious scheme held that this world was the scene of a struggle between two titantic forces, light and darkness or good and evil. The forces of light would gain the ultimate victory, for God was on their side. Moreover, this struggle took place on a small scale in the life of every man. Good and evil contended for mastery in every soul. If goodness won a complete victory, the soul was reunited with God immediately after death. Most men however succumbed in greater or less degree to the forces of darkness, so that their spirits needed purification before they could be united with God. The purification was carried out by fire in a place known as purgatory. Thither the soiled soul was sent to be seared by the purifying flame until all the evil was cleansed from it. (Incidentally, here is evidence of the influence of the Persian religion upon Christian ideas of purgatory and hell.)

The Persians believed that the maximum stay in purgatory was twelve months, and only the completely wicked needed so long a period of cleansing. It is this belief that influenced Judaism. A son who recited the Kaddish for his father for a full year in effect proclaimed to the world that he thought his father had been so wicked as to need the maximum term in the purifying crucible. Hence the custom of limiting the recital of the Kaddish to less than twelve months. The saying of the Kaddish helped the soul in purgatory, for it was believed that demons afflicted it there, and according to talmudic tradition demons became powerless when the name of God was pronounced.

Saying the Kaddish on the anniversary of a death is of much later origin. It came out of the persecution launched against Jews by Crusaders who saw no sense in going to the Holy Land to slay infidels when Jewish unbelievers lived unmolested in their midst. Many a Jewish family and community were destroyed through the Crusaders' misconception of Christianity. A year after a large Jewish settlement

had been wiped out, the survivors in a neighboring community met and recited the Kaddish in memory of the slain. From this beginning the custom of reciting the Kaddish on the anniversary of death developed until it became universal in Jewish life.

Reform Judaism does not believe in purgatory or in demons. It does not believe that the old reasons for saying the Kaddish are valid or essential parts of the faith. Yet how better can children honor their father or mother than by coming, in the year following their death, to the house of worship to remind themselves of the glory of God and the duty of working for his kingdom of justice? If their allegiance is genuine, if it comes from the heart as well as from the lips and is reflected in life as well as in ritual, then indeed they have created a beautiful memorial to their dear ones. Parents are honored best, not by granite monuments or marble sepulchers or garlands of flowers, but by high-minded thinking and noble living on the part of the children whose lives they made possible.

The Kaddish prayer reveals the majesty and power of prophetic religion, its understanding of human nature, and the resources of strength it holds for those who practice it. Standing around the grave that has just received the body of a dear one, the mourners are broken by grief. They may feel that hereafter their days will be dark, that fate has been cruel and unjust. Perhaps their lips form words of bitterness and revolt. At that moment Judaism gives a clear-cut command: " Mourners, I speak to you out of experience over many centuries with people who faced the same sorrow that you now face. I know what words and thoughts helped them; I know what words and thoughts can comfort you. If now you yield to bitterness, to revolt, to resentment, you will not only be marring the memory of your dear one but you will be warping your souls and blackening your future. At this moment, the best thing for

you to do is to say and believe the words, ' Extolled and hallowed be the name of God. May His Kingdom come, and His will be done in all the earth.' "

In my mind's eye I see a host of mourning men and women in many ages, in many lands, in many walks of life — believing Jews, heartbroken, crushed and despairing as they stand by the open grave, and there and then receiving new hope and new faith by the prayer which prophetic religion puts upon their lips.

The Messiah Idea

In discussing the idea of the messiah in Jewish history, it must be remembered that in ancient times, as today, there were many variant tendencies of thought on all subjects and that seemingly contradictory attitudes could and did exist side by side. There were many beliefs about the messiah, which at times contradicted and at times supplemented each other. A number of important philosophies clustered about this idea. Today we can see which point of view triumphed, and in that triumph is to be read the character of the Jewish religion.

The Hebrew word *messiah* means literally " one who rescues " or " one who brings salvation." It was a term applied to the victorious general or army leader who saved his people from being ravaged by a powerful enemy. In the early days of the Hebrew commonwealth, when the tribes were being federated into one nation, the chief function of the tribal leader was to protect his people from danger, and the primary danger came from hostile tribes and nations. Hence the king or chief or sheik invariably was chosen for his physical prowess. This was true of both Saul and David. Saul became king because he towered over his fellows and led them successfully in battle. When Saul was defeated his kingship came to an end. David was made king because he had overcome Goliath, the leader of the Philistines. Because the king or ruler protected his

subjects, he was known as their messiah. The term had no religious or theological significance. In biblical times it was used as Americans use "governor" or "president." The head of the state was the messiah. In the Hebrew commonwealth, it was customary for kings on assuming office to have oil poured upon their heads, to be anointed. The messiah who was also a king was invariably anointed, and the term "messiah" thus came to mean also "the anointed one."

After the Hebrew nation was conquered, foreign tyrants oppressed the people and exiled or imprisoned their kings. In their suffering the people cherished the hope for the coming of a messiah, that is, for the coming of their liberator and king, who would drive out the oppressors and restore the nation. The harder their lot the more did they long for the return of their king, their messiah.

Into this picture Jesus fits perfectly. He appeared in the days when Pontius Pilate, one of the most cruel procurators in Roman history, governed Judea — when Rome's arrogance was most galling and its oppressive measures most burdensome. The hope of the masses for a messiah was particularly fervent under these conditions. Pilate was well aware of what the messiah idea meant to the people.

According to the New Testament records, Jesus came to the Holy City to observe the Passover. This was the Jewish festival of freedom — what the Fourth of July is to Americans and the Fourteenth of July to Frenchmen — and thousands of Jews thronged to Jerusalem to celebrate it. Any individual arriving in Jerusalem at that time who was hailed by the masses as their messiah, their king, who was rumored to be a descendant of the royal house of David, who roused the hope of liberation — such a person unquestionably was a threat to the power of Rome, might be the leader of an armed revolt, and would certainly be considered a rebel against Caesar. He was doomed by the needs of Roman imperialism. Pilate ordered the execution of

Jesus, and his soldiers wrote upon the cross the name of Jesus' crime — that he was " the King of the Jews," that he had assumed to be his people's savior from Roman tyranny.

The nationalistic concept of the messiah evidenced in this case was very popular among the Jewish masses, but along with it there existed also a more universal messiah idea which had developed as a result of the prophetic teachings. In his great eleventh chapter Isaiah set forth his faith in the coming of an ideal ruler who would usher in an age of righteousness, justice and peace for the entire world. In time those who were sympathetic with the prophetic tradition began to associate the messiah idea with this ideal ruler of Isaiah. The descendant of the stock of Jesse who should be filled with the spirit of wisdom and with knowledge and the fear of God, who should judge the poor with righteousness and slay the wicked with the breath of his lips — who was this but the restored king of Judea, the messiah? But he was not merely to win back national independence; he was to liberate all the human race from tyranny and injustice, hatred and war. He would bring in a golden age, the kingdom of God upon earth. He was to be a universal messiah. Thus nationalism and internationalism were blended through the prophetic tradition.

At the time of Jesus, this prophetic conception of the messiah had considerable currency in Jewish circles. When some of Jesus' followers, all of whom were Jews, began to insist that Jesus was the messiah, those who did not agree asked, " How could he have been the messiah? Wars, injustice and hatred still rage over the earth." For the messiah, by the magic of his personality and the power of God within him, would forever rout these evils. Some of Jesus' followers recognized the validity of this argument, but being loyal to their hero they pointed out that, while he had not yet fulfilled his messianic mission, he had gone from this earth only temporarily and would soon return to complete his task; and they began to speak of his second coming.

The masses of Jews, however, refused to accept this notion. Misery was still widespread; hence it was plain that the messiah had not yet appeared. But the people kept their faith that he would come some day, when God was ready to send him. And so there crept into the daily prayers a petition that God would speedily send the messiah in order that the suffering of Jews and of all mankind might come to an end.

Many pious souls waited in vain all their lifetime for the messiah. The feeling arose that their faith should be rewarded. In time the belief developed that when the messiah came, the righteous dead would rise from the grave to greet his advent and enjoy life in the kingdom of justice for which they had labored. Thus was the dogma of the resurrection of the dead linked with the messianic hope.

In the course of Jewish history a number of men have appeared who claimed to be the heaven-sent messiah. The most famous of these is Shabbatai Zevi, born in Smyrna in 1626, who proclaimed himself the messiah about the year 1648, roused the Jewries of Europe and even created a stir in Christian and Mohammedan circles. He told the Jews to dispose of all their possessions and follow him to the Holy Land, where he would restore the Jewish state and then bring an end to the woes of all humanity. While Oliver Cromwell, the British leader, did not believe that Shabbatai was the messiah, he did like many devout Christians believe that a messiah was due to appear. Rabbi Manasseh Ben Israel of Amsterdam appealed to him to readmit the Jews to England, whence they had been banished by King John, in order that Jews might be scattered over all the world, thus fulfilling one of the biblical conditions of the messiah's arrival.

Shabbatai's movement came to a disastrous end. When he reached Turkey and demanded Jerusalem of its Mohammedan ruler, he was imprisoned. Soon after, he and many of his followers became Mohammedans. This spiritual collapse brought terrible disillusionment to the Jewish

masses of Europe who had rested their hopes in him. Large numbers of them abandoned the faith of the synagogue. Many rabbis had declared Shabbatai an impostor and had predicted the debacle of his plan, but the suffering masses of Jews followed him because he promised them relief. The sect that bears his name still exists. After Shabbatai Zevi there were other false messiahs, but none created the enthusiasm or enjoyed the following that had been his.

To this day many Jews cling to the messianic idea. They envision the coming of a leader who will take the Jewish people back to Palestine, re-establish the Jewish state, and usher in a world-wide reign of peace and good will. In this hope Judaism's sense of justice is linked with national aspirations and the universal vision of the prophets. Thus was realized what is being learned afresh today: that the salvation of Jews is bound up with the salvation of humanity.

These Jews have little sympathy with the efforts of modern Zionism to rebuild the Jewish state. They contend that it is arrogance and insolence for men to try to hasten the messiah's coming. He will come at the command of God, not at the will of men. To attempt to restore the Jewish state is to attempt to force the divine hand. Hence the Zionists receive lukewarm support, if any, from adherents of the old ideal.

Zionists, on the other hand, declare that the Jewish nation must be restored through Jewish sacrifice and that the spirit of God is to be seen in the energy and unselfishness Jews display in rebuilding Palestine. They would cooperate with God and do their part to hasten the messiah's coming by creating an emancipated Jewish state in the land where the prophets spoke and the psalmists sang. Zionists emphasize the nationalistic tendencies in the Jewish tradition.

Reform Judaism has eliminated from its prayer book the prayer for the coming of the messiah. It does not believe

that any one person will restore the Jewish nation and emancipate humanity. However individual Jews may feel about it, Reform Judaism, basing itself on the highest in prophetic religion, is unconcerned as to the establishment of a Jewish state. It permits but does not compel anyone to be a Zionist. Nonetheless, it subscribes fully to the belief in the coming, not of a messiah, but of a messianic age. That age of peace will come when men, purging their souls of greed and hatred, establish justice in the gate and thus through human effort and human sacrifice and human pain build the kingdom of God. Reform Judaism believes in no personal messiah miraculously sent. Rather it believes that a morally disciplined and spiritually sensitive humanity, by realizing the divine within itself, can through its own efforts create a golden age on earth. The miracle will be man-made and God-inspired.

The messianic idea has played an important role in the history of the Jew. It is evidence of his unquenchable hope for the future and his unshakable faith in the justice and righteousness of God. So long as Jews believe in a messiah, so long as they are confident of the coming of a messianic age, no cruelty, no oppression, no humiliation will destroy them, for such a people has found the fountain of eternal life. No calamity can annihilate, no temporary triumph of tyranny shatter, the Jewish dream for mankind.

Jesus, a Son of the Synagogue

It seems perfectly natural that in a book on Judaism a section should be devoted to Jesus, around whose personality the Christian religion has been built. In other ages, because of persecutions for which the church and its leaders were at times responsible, Jews looked upon Christianity as their persecutor and foe, and upon Jesus, who had been born a Jew, as the cause of all their suffering. His name therefore was never mentioned in Jewish circles. To refer to him unkindly would have meant to arouse the passions

and hatred of one's neighbors. To refer to him kindly was impossible because of the fear and pain which his name called forth. Nor was it possible to speak about him in the spirit of historical science, because no book which was not in agreement with the church's official position could be published. If such a book had been published stealthily, publisher and author would soon have felt the wrath of the state, which was in alliance with the church. Even in the eighteenth century when Gotthold Lessing, Germany's great liberal poet and dramatist, published some New Testament studies which challenged the official Christian theology, he encountered fierce indignation and found himself in all sorts of difficulties. Unable, therefore, to approach the subject calmly, and restrained from expressing themselves honestly, Jews were silent about Jesus, and made no reference to that son of Israel whom millions of human beings worship as the son of God and rank next to God himself.

Times, however, have changed. In a century of liberty and enlightenment, Jews have met with a new attitude of friendship and fellowship on the part of many Christian leaders. In fact the liberties of Jews were made possible because some Christians, lay and clerical, insisted that they are entitled to the same freedom as other human beings. In the French parliament which accepted the slogan " Liberty, equality and fraternity," there were those who believed these principles could not apply to Jews. Abbé Grégoire, a churchman, and Baron Mirabeau, an aristocrat, led the fight for Jewish emancipation in the early days of the French republic. In Great Britain Macaulay wrote against the disabilities of Jews.

Meanwhile Christian scholars had begun to study Jesus with the same objectivity with which other historical personalities had been studied. They had accepted the laws of historical criticism with reference to the Old Testament, and now proceeded to apply them to the New. They saw

that, just as the Torah had not been written by Moses, so the traditional views about the authorship of the New Testament were questionable. They did not believe that Moses split the Red Sea in two, and they did not believe that Jesus walked on the waters of the Sea of Galilee. They did not believe that the sun stood still at Joshua's command, and they could not believe that Jesus was born without a human father. As a result of their studies a new Jesus began to emerge, a Jesus who still possessed noble and heroic qualities but was shorn of the theological trappings with which history and tradition had clothed him. To the theologian, Jesus was the miraculously sent son of God, partaking of the nature of God, God-made-flesh. To these new scholars, Jesus was a human being, born like other human beings, but one possessed of prophetic spirit, of deep insight into God's nature and of great love for humanity. Some even went so far as to distinguish between Christ and Jesus, the theological person and the historical person. They found moreover that it was not easy to determine accurately the events of Jesus' life. The four biographies of Jesus — namely, the four Gospels of the New Testament — are not in complete harmony and indeed contradict each other in numerous places. Some scholars went to the absurd extreme of denying that Jesus was a historical person, as others had declared that Moses never lived. But these extremes were temporary currents in the field of scholarship. Today Jesus remains the way of life for many Christians who cannot accept the Christ of theology but can admire and regard as their model the humble Jewish carpenter of Nazareth.

While these momentous discoveries were taking place and being echoed in pulpit and seminary, the Jew was being emancipated from the medieval world in which he had been compelled to live. He too became a modern. He read modern books and studied modern science. He became acquainted with the works of Christian biblical scholars. His views about the Old Testament began to change,

and he began to have views about the New Testament. Of course not all Jews yielded to the modern attitude, any more than all Christians. Fundamentalism in the Protestant churches and rigid orthodoxy in the synagogue alike represent a resistance to the scientific spirit. But many Jews became imbued with the modern temper.

Today a considerable number of Jews have taken a position on Jesus, and many Jewish scholars have written books about him. Perhaps the best which has appeared is *A Jewish View of Jesus* by the late Hyman G. Enelow, who was the rabbi of Temple Emanuel, New York city, the most influential Jewish congregation in the world. Equally well known is *Jesus of Nazareth* by Joseph Klausner, professor at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, which was written in Hebrew and translated into English by a churchman of Jerusalem. Scores of rabbis, preaching to their congregations on the sacred Sabbath, have devoted sermons to the life and work of Jesus. Their views are not in full agreement, but in general they share an appreciation of Jesus' character and of his influence on civilization, and recognize that his teachings are not alien to the teachings of the synagogue. Usually these rabbis have emphasized Jesus' Jewishness — not merely his physical Jewishness but even more his ethical and spiritual Jewishness. The rabbis who express these views are not obscure men in insignificant congregations. Among them are such titans as the late Emil G. Hirsch of Temple Sinai, Chicago; the late Joseph Krauskopf of Philadelphia; Stephen S. Wise of the Free Synagogue, New York; and Samuel Goldenson of Temple Emanuel, New York.

My own thesis is that Jesus was born, lived and died as a Jew, intended to found no new religion, worshiped devoutly in the synagogue, subscribed to its major principles and observed its holy days and ceremonies, was a faithful exponent of the best in prophetic religion, and by his courageous death merely exemplified the readiness for martyr-

dom which has always characterized the faithful Jew. These views are neither novel nor original. They are shared by many of my fellow rabbis, who like myself are children of the ancient synagogue and at the same time sons of the modern world. Their basis is the New Testament itself.

However the biographies of Jesus may conflict, all agree that he was born in a Jewish home in Judea. He was called by the name Joshua, which in Greek is Jesus. Except for a brief stay in Egypt during his infancy (which is probably legendary) Joshua, or Jesus, lived his entire life within the boundaries of the Jewish community. His family, friends and associates, all his contacts were Jewish. The schools he attended were Jewish. The shrines where he worshiped were the synagogues. The prayers he loved were Jewish. In every way, Jesus lived the life of a Jewish youth of his time and age.

That Jesus remained a professing Jew the records clearly indicate. One of the Gospels says that he stated that he had come not to destroy the law but to fulfill it. The Gospel of Mark tells how he was approached by a scribe and asked what was the first commandment. Jesus replied as would any son of the synagogue throughout history: with the Shema. Let the New Testament speak for itself:

> And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. (Mark 12:28–31)

The religion of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man with which Jesus' name is associated was and is the religion of the synagogue. The prophets taught that

there is one God and, therefore, one humanity. They spoke of God as the Father of all. They taught love and mercy as well as justice. They attacked the frailties and faults of their own people, and condemned them in the name of Judaism and the one God. But a minister, rabbi or priest who stands in his pulpit today and points out the immoralities of his age or country does not thereby withdraw from his community. He is merely carrying out his duty in contrasting the life about him with the moral principles laid down by God. So when Jesus, like the prophets before him, rebuked and reprimanded, whether it was the money-changers or other evildoers, he was in no way dissociating himself either from the synagogue and its teachings or from prophetic religion. To the ethical and spiritual content of synagogue teachings Jesus added nothing. He merely re-articulated prophetic religion.

Recently there came to my desk a copy of the New Testament sent me by a Christian missionary who hopes to wean me away from Judaism. In that New Testament, all quotations from the Old Testament are printed in heavy type. They demonstrate what the missionary hoped they would — the influence of the Old Testament on the New. Eliminate from the New Testament these quotations and you eliminate its heart and soul.

Not only did Jesus reveal an intimate knowledge and appreciation of the Hebrew Bible, not only did he quote it frequently, but in his use of parable and story to carry home religious truths he imitated the rabbis of his day. The great Jewish scholar Israel Abrahams, in his book *Pharisaism in the Gospels,* traces the influence of rabbinic thought and rabbinic phrases and metaphors on Jesus. Not infrequently Christians declare that the heart of Jesus' teachings is found in the Golden Rule: " Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." But a generation before Jesus, Rabbi Hillel had taught that all of Judaism can be summed up in one sentence: " Do not do unto others what thou wouldst

not have others do unto thee." This statement of Hillel's has already been referred to. It is merely another indication of the closeness of Jesus' teachings to the spirit of Judaism, of the synagogue, of the rabbis.

But if the religion of Jesus was Judaism, how account for his death? Among Christians the view prevails that Jesus was put to death by the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, at the insistent demands and threats of Jewish leadership. According to this tradition, Pilate recognized the sweetness and nobility of Jesus; Jewish leaders did not. Pilate sought to save his life, but could not withstand the leaders of the Jewish community and hence acquiesced in the execution.

Jewish scholars reject as unhistorical and inaccurate this placing of the blame for Jesus' death upon Jewish religious leaders. They have demonstrated that no Jewish community would have held a trial on the eve of the Passover. Jewish courts were loath to condemn anyone to death, and crucifixion was a form of capital punishment not sanctioned by Jewish law. The New Testament account of the trial and conviction of Jesus is out of keeping with all Jewish legal procedure. Jesus had done nothing which would have justified waiving that procedure, and certainly nothing which would have warranted the death penalty under Jewish law.

On the other hand, as has been pointed out in the section on the messiah idea, the presence of Jesus in Jerusalem on the eve of the Passover and his popularity with the Jewish masses, who hailed him as their emancipator, were a threat to the imperial power. In the minds of the Roman rulers, Jesus was a revolutionary leader and as such was summarily executed by Roman soldiers at the command of the Roman governor. Not Judaism but Roman imperialism was responsible for his death. In this view liberal Christian scholars concur.

Why then does the New Testament give an erroneous account? To understand this it is necessary to understand

the history of the New Testament. Elsewhere in this book the history of the Old Testament was discussed. It was shown to be the work of many men over many centuries and it was pointed out that many of the events recorded in it have no historical basis, but are merely vehicles used by great preachers to set forth their ideas of God and man. Modern scholarship has demonstrated that the traditional beliefs about the New Testament likewise need revision.

According to Christian scholars, all the four lives of Jesus — the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John — were written from thirty to one hundred years after the death of their hero. Like many of the stories of the Old Testament, they were intended to teach certain religious views. They were propaganda documents, missionary pamphlets aimed at prospective converts. They were written at a time when Christians were busy trying to convert Romans to Christianity and Jews were busy trying to convert Romans to Judaism; that is to say, Christian and Jewish missionaries were competing for support in the Roman world. Consequently, the Christians' missionary pamphlets had to be pro-Roman and anti-Jewish.

It is important to remember that after Jesus' death none of his followers, all of whom were Jews, thought of separating from the synagogue and forming a new religion. One group of disciples, who believed that Jesus was the messiah even though he had failed to accomplish the messianic mission, declared that he would soon return to fulfill it. But they were not molested by other Jews, who were indifferent as to what any Jew believed or did not believe concerning the messiah. Presently however these Jewish Christians, as they may be called, attempted to win others to their view of Jesus. They made little headway among Jews, but were more successful among the pagans of the Roman empire. In the course of their efforts they found that the major obstacle to winning Roman converts was not the principles of the Jewish religion but its ritual practices.

Among these Jewish Christians there appeared an epileptic named Saul, a Jew who had been brought up in the Greek city of Tarsus, where he was known by the Greek form of his name, Paul. Paul determined to break away from the ritual observances of Judaism and to create a new world religion. He took the ideals of the prophets, added to them the teachings of neo-Platonic philosophy, flavored the combination with Oriental mysteries, and made Jesus the central figure, thus fashioning the religion of the church as in some respects it has survived to this day. Paul's religion made converts among the Romans much more readily than Judaism, which with its universal outlook clung to particularistic ritual practices. Moreover, Paul's God-made-flesh was much easier for idol-worshipers to accept than Judaism's one invisible God.

When Paul determined to break with the synagogue an important movement in the history of mankind began. Whether Judaism would have triumphed in Europe if Paul had not come upon the scene is an unanswerable question. What the religion of Europe would be if Pauline Christianity had not appeared no one can guess. As it was, the church and the synagogue became rivals to supplant the decaying religion of the Roman empire. The church succeeded.

The books of the New Testament were written at a time when Judaism and Christianity were engaged in bitter competition, and they reflect the intensity of that rivalry and the animus with which the competing missionaries regarded each other. The older the New Testament book, the friendlier it is to Judaism, because it was written when Jews and Christians had not yet parted company. Thus in the oldest biography of Jesus, the Gospel of Mark, when Jesus is asked what is the first commandment, he answers with the Shema. The Gospel of Matthew, which is a later biography, in relating what appears to be the same incident leaves out the Shema — an indication that the young

church was already beginning to sever itself from Judaism and wanted to cover up its relationship to the synagogue. The Gospels of Luke and John, the last to be written, make no reference whatever to the incident in which Jesus repeated the fundamental prayer of the synagogue.

In their treatment of Jesus' death the Gospel writers accomplished two objects. That Jesus was crucified was indubitable, and crucifixion was an accepted form of execution among the Romans. That Pontius Pilate had consented to the execution had to be stated. But he could be cleared of guilt by writing the account in such fashion that the blame would fall on Jewish religious leaders. Thus Roman opinion was appeased and the Jewish missionaries were discredited. In vindicating Pilate the Gospel writers disregarded the fact that his character is pretty well established from other sources. He was violent, brutal and sensual. In Jewish history he was known for his ruthlessness and cruelty. That such a man would yield to the pressure of Jewish leadership is incredible, and that he would hesitate for one moment to execute another Jewish rebel — he executed many — is likewise out of keeping with his character.

The death of Jesus, therefore, was not the result of a Jewish conspiracy. It was not demanded by the teachings of the Jewish religion, nor was it in keeping with Jewish judicial procedure. In the days of Rome's rule over Judea many a Jew sought to lead a revolt and was caught and cruelly executed by the imperial power. For these messiahs the Jewish community had only sympathy and understanding. Jesus was but another martyr for his faith and his people. Martyrdom is not a novel experience in Jewish life. According to Jewish teaching, the martyr for a holy cause attains the rank of the sanctification of the name of God.

Not only did Jesus live and die a Jew, but his influence on humanity represents one of the Jewish contributions to civilization. The significance of Jewish history lies not in

the achievements of its kings or priests, but in the ethical and spiritual insights of its great prophets. One of those prophets conceived of the mission of the Jew as teaching to all mankind the belief in the one God and the morality growing out of that belief. Through the life and death of Jesus, Israel's mission was in part fulfilled. Because of the magnetism he exercised on his disciples, because of the warmth and gentleness of his personality, Jesus became an important instrument for the dissemination of prophetic religion. In his name the Bible has been translated into every tongue.

On the twenty-fifth day of December the Christian church celebrates the birthday of Jesus. In all lands of the world countless human beings turn toward the village of Bethlehem in Judea where, almost twenty centuries ago, a Jewish lad was born surrounded by his Jewish family. As these millions recall the birth of this lad, his sweetness, his tenderness, his goodness, they become kinder, nobler, more conscious of their obligations to their fellows, more cooperative and more just. Stirred to the depths by his memory they fall to their knees in prayer. This is the finest tribute that the modern world can pay to the synagogue of old and the religion it fostered. It is the homage of the present day to the lofty ethics, universal faith and rugged character of the Jewish community in the time of the Roman empire, and to the prophetic teachers who made that community possible. Joshua, known as Jesus, is an effective exponent and champion of prophetic religion.

Part III

THE APPLICATION OF JUDAISM TO LIFE

THE APPLICATION OF JUDAISM TO LIFE

Religious Ceremonies

THE PROPHETS of Israel created an incomparable religion. But they wanted more than lip service to their teachings. They wanted their principles to guide and dominate every activity of man, to become part of everyday life. The instincts of the jungle continually drag man away from his highest possibilities. Greed and selfishness triumph over generosity and altruism. How can the prophetic way of life be made as instinctive with man as the satisfaction of physical hunger? The answer, of course, is education.

Too many people think of education as a matter of schoolrooms and textbooks. The fact is that every experience educates — influences a person, strengthens and molds his character, builds up or destroys his moral stamina. For education is the training not only of the mind but also of the emotions. Religion to be vital must be felt; it must be tied up with the emotions as well as with the intellect. In order to strengthen this tie, religion has developed a teaching device of its own, namely, ceremony or rite. The ceremony is a dramatic method of inculcating religious principles, keeping alive vital ideals or calling to mind historic events which illustrate religious truths. Few people are able to grasp directly the abstract truths of religion. Everybody knows today that a great moral or political ideal can be much more effectively brought home to the average man through the motion picture or drama than through textbooks or orations. Religion understood that centuries ago. Its rites were invented by wise men who had looked deep into human nature and knew its needs and aptitudes.

All historic religions developed music, the dance, poetry and pictorial and dramatic art and used them to convey eternal truths.

We have already spoken of the attitude of the prophets toward ceremonial — how they protested against it because they saw that most people substituted ritual observances for a righteous way of life. It is true that any ceremonial runs the risk of becoming an empty form. Lighting the candles on the Sabbath eve may be described in physical or chemical terms, and eating the matzoth and bitter herbs on the eve of Passover may be merely partaking of food. But to the believing soul these observances are full of meaning. It is the duty of religious leaders to see to it that the ceremonies remain vital, that they be not mechanically performed. The ceremony is a ladder to God, but not God; the alphabet of religion, but not religion; the spur to the good life, but not the good life.

Today too religious ceremonies are valid. Man has not outgrown his need for them. It is still true, as it was four or five thousand years ago, that man learns slowly and is apt to forget the eternal truths. Modern living is so complex, the struggle for existence demands so much energy, that it is all too easy to lose sight of the goal of life. The Passover festival, for example, is the festival of freedom, commemorating the exodus from Egypt. Now it may be urged that people are well aware that freedom is desirable and know all about the exodus. Why should they interrupt their busy lives to make the Passover arrangements and go to all the expense involved in them? Because no one is so completely devoted to freedom that he can do without the glorification of freedom. No one is so completely devoted to justice for enslaved peoples that he is giving as much of himself as possible to its achievement. He needs to be constantly reminded of these ideals and to renew his allegiance to them, for then there is hope that they will come to determine his actions.

Judaism is by no means alone in this insight. The Christian world annually celebrates the Easter festival, the supreme day in the calendar of the church. The sanctuaries are decorated with flowers and the worshipers come in their finest attire, usually too many of them to be accommodated. If you scan the newspaper reports of church services the next day you will find that every preacher gave the same message, the message of the immortality of the soul. Now Christians may be supposed to know that the soul is immortal. They were taught it as children, and many of them have formally subscribed to this dogma. Why then every year this emphasis on an old and accepted belief? Because the immortality of the soul is important to man. It is important for him to know that he is not a passing shadow, a creature of temporary value; so important that all the genius a great religion can command is used year after year to remind him of this truth.

The holy days of the synagogue date back to very ancient times. Reform Judaism does not believe that all the traditional prescriptions for their observance must be followed to the letter — abstaining from bread and changing the dishes on Passover, conforming to the dietary laws, and so on. These particularities may once have had a certain psychological value, but they represent extremes. But as to the vitalizing power of the holy days and their ceremonies there can be no question. They dramatize the eternal values of religion and thus serve as indispensable educational devices. Religions which ban such observances become anemic, and their communicants seek in secular organizations the drama they miss in religion.

Let us look at the great festivals of Judaism and their meaning.

Rosh Hashonoh

The synagogue year commences with Rosh Hashonoh or the New Year, which occurs in the fall, the date varying

from September to October. This variation is due to the fact that the Jewish religious calendar is based on the moon, whereas the secular calendar is based on the sun. The Jewish New Year was originally a ten-day period of penitence, concluding with the Day of Atonement. Thus the leaders of the synagogue planned a religious revival for the beginning of the year. As has already been mentioned, tradition taught that the Book of Judgment was opened on Rosh Hashonoh. The good were inscribed for life, the wicked for death. The in-betweens had an opportunity, during the ten days of penitence, of securing forgiveness for their sins, so that on the Day of Atonement when the books were sealed again their names would be found in the book of life.

The blowing of the ram's horn or *shofar* was the outstanding characteristic of the service. In Reform temples the ram's horn is no longer used because it is difficult to blow and because there is no certainty as to the sounds that are to be reproduced. A musical service for the trumpet has taken its place. The trumpet is very effective, yet it would seem a good thing if the *shofar* were restored and both it and the trumpet were used. There is something authentic about the *shofar,* something that links the modern man with the shepherd nomad. When a mouthpiece is fitted to the *shofar* it can easily be blown.

Like all other Jewish festivals, Rosh Hashonoh commences on the eve and lasts till sunset on the next day. This is based on the fact that the account of creation in Genesis says that evening came first and the day afterwards.

Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur or the Day of Atonement, commencing on the eve of the tenth day after Rosh Hashonoh, is devoted to prayer and fasting. Many members of Reform congregations no longer observe the fast and attend only two of the services, that on Yom Kippur eve and the memorial service in the afternoon. It is to be regretted that many find it

necessary to carry on their business as usual on Yom Kippur morning, and do not participate in the morning service. While fasting on that day is not essential, it is recommended. In the afternoon there is a special children's service.

The Yom Kippur eve service is known as the Kol Nidre service, after the old hymn with which it opens. Much controversy has revolved about this hymn because its original words include a prayer for absolution from vows. The vows referred to were not those made by man to his fellow man, but those made by a man to God, which he had not kept. At most, the words had only a ritual significance. Foes of the Jews have utterly distorted the meaning of this hymn and used it to insinuate that Jews do not consider their promises binding. This is entirely false and a complete misrepresentation. One of the most important prescriptions for the Day of Atonement is the rabbinic maxim that before a man can make his peace with God he must make his peace with his fellow man.

The Day of Atonement calls on the individual to search his soul, to judge his way of life not according to mortal standards but in the light of divine teachings. The initial mood of guilt, failure and frustration leads to prayers of remorse and repentance. Then come new resolves and new hopes, based on God's promise to forgive the sincerely repentant sinner and always to make him capable of a better life. The ritual of the Day of Atonement is stirring and impressive. The Jew who participates in it invariably goes away strengthened in spirit, with new confidence in himself, in his integrity and in his capacity to measure up to the highest standards.

Succoth

In ancient times, immediately after the Day of Atonement, the faithful began to build the *succah,* the booth, symbolic of the booths in which Israel dwelt in the wilder-

ness and the feature of the Succoth festival. Succoth originally was a harvest festival such as was celebrated by all peoples. When the crops were gathered, the grain stored in the granaries, the fruits preserved, the grapes turned into wine, man was prepared for the coming cold season and he rejoiced and thanked God. The Pilgrim fathers too, moved by biblical precedent, celebrated a harvest festival after their first successful harvest and created Thanksgiving Day.

In Jewish history the thanksgiving Succoth festival was linked with the period of wandering in the desert. Hence it was urged that all generations of Jews live in booths that they might remember the hardships of the wilderness. Though the booths were a frail protection, the children of Israel were strong because God was their roof and their shelter. In this age too Succoth can remind men that God is their protector.

In ancient times men brought offerings to the temple on Succoth. In modern synagogues children bring their offerings of food (generally fruit) and place them on the altar for subsequent distribution to the sick, the aged and the needy. One congregation in America has for a number of years held an outdoor Succoth service. Beneath stately trees on a spacious lawn, the children gather to worship God. There they sense his power in nature, and as they bring their offerings they feel in a vital way the beauty and strength of Judaism.

Simchath Torah

The last day of the Succoth festival is the Day for the Rejoicing over the Law, Simchath Torah, and is synchronized with the completion of the annual reading of the Torah in the temple. Reform Judaism at first discarded Simchath Torah, but in many Reform temples it has been revised and reinterpreted to demonstrate dramatically the transmission of the Torah from generation to generation and its spiritual vitality in age after age. In the old syna-

gogue, there were processions with the Torah throughout the day and the preceding evening. Everyone who desired could march holding the scrolls of the law. In some Reform congregations today three groups take turns in marching with the Torah, representing respectively the grandfathers, the fathers and the children and youth of the congregation. The grandfathers hand the Torahs to the fathers, the fathers to the youth. This ceremony is intended to symbolize that in each generation there arise defenders and upholders of the faith.

Chanukah

The Chanukah festival is celebrated for eight days at the beginning of winter. Its chief ceremony is the kindling of lights. On the first day one light is kindled, and on each succeeding day one light is added until on the last eight lights shine forth. Like all Jewish festivals, this one commences in the evening and the lights are kindled in the home at night.

Chanukah marks the anniversary of the victory of the Maccabees over the armies of Antiochus Epiphanes, who in the second century B.C.E. sought to annihilate Jews and Judaism. The Maccabees were a heroic family who refused to abandon their faith. They raised the standard of revolt, and after three years of fighting accomplished the impossible: they defeated the trained armies of a mighty empire, drove out the invader, purified and cleansed the temple and restored the worship of the one God. Tradition has it that when the temple was cleansed only one flask of sacred oil was found, but it lasted miraculously and fueled the holy flame for eight days while fresh oil was being prepared.

Thus Chanukah commemorates an event of historical importance — the preservation of Judaism. If Judaism had disappeared in 165 B.C.E. there would be no Christianity and no Mohammedanism. No wonder some Christian churches observe the festival of the Maccabees. The

Maccabees are rightfully universal heroes, for the faith they preserved has proved through the centuries an inspiration to many peoples. Chanukah also symbolizes a great ideal — the power inherent in a righteous minority. The Maccabees were a handful, unskilled and unarmed. Antiochus Epiphanes had at his disposal the wealth of an empire as well as its trained and well equipped soldiery. But the Maccabees were in the right. They resisted tyranny and by their courage saved the treasures of civilization. Their memory should inspire all minorities who have great ideals to refuse to admit defeat even though they are outnumbered and seemingly overwhelmed.

Chanukah is a joyous festival. It can be made very dramatic and inspiring as well as delightful. Nowadays Chanukah plays and socials are given in the religious schools. Chanukah parties in homes are to be encouraged. In some communities children are given presents on this festival. A distinguished American rabbi and educator suggested that parents give presents to their children on every night of Chanukah, major gifts on the first and last days and more trifling gifts on the intervening days. Thus an element of surprise is provided for every evening and the children look forward to the kindling of the lights. This suggestion has met with significant success and its wider adoption is to be recommended. If Chanukah celebrations are to be successful, parents must devote much effort to them.

Purim

Like Chanukah, Purim is a minor festival. It has grown out of the story of Esther, which tells how Haman's attempt to destroy the Jews of Persia was frustrated by the loyalty of Mordecai and the beauty and sacrifice of Esther. The Book of Esther is fiction, but so often have Jews been exposed to destruction by the Hamans of many ages that the story has had peculiar and lasting appeal.

Purim is celebrated by masquerade parties. In some

synagogues the Book of Esther is read on the eve of the festival. But though Esther, Mordecai and Haman steal the spotlight on Purim, it is important to remember also the king of Persia, whose sense of fairness enabled the Jews to triumph over their enemies. Wherever Jews have been persecuted, they have been saved not merely through their own efforts but through the generosity and sacrifice of non-Jews in whose midst they lived.

Passover

To the student of religious history the Passover festival is most revealing, for it shows the traces of many civilizations. Primarily it is a spring festival. The celebration of spring, like the harvest observance, was universal among early peoples. As the winter waned, the store of food dwindled. Spring brought the promise of new food supplies and hence of more abundant life. Its coming therefore was eagerly awaited and was greeted with great rejoicing. Since spring renews the life of nature it was frequently dramatized as the season of resurrection, of life rising from the icy tomb and reappearing on earth. Many ancient stories of the gods, for instance the Greek tale of Proserpina, are such dramatizations. Easter, the spring festival of the Christian church, retains some of the primitive dramatization, for it marks the resurrection of Jesus from the grave, and this is interpreted as giving assurance of human immortality. In Judaism the spring festival has become the Passover. Instead of the resurrection of a god from the grave it marks the resurrection of a people from bondage; it is the great festival of freedom. The theme of freedom, like that of immortality, is inherent in spring and both themes are recognized in the synagogue service.

Like Succoth, the Passover is celebrated for seven days, with major emphasis on the first and last days. On Passover eve the Seder service takes place. This is a home ceremony during which the story of the exodus is read from a book

known as the Haggadah. The matzoth and the lamb-bone are important symbols in the service. Matzoth are unleavened cakes, said to be like the hastily prepared bread which the children of Israel ate as they fled from Egypt. The lamb-bone symbolizes the pascal lamb whose blood was sprinkled on the doorposts of Jewish homes so that the angel of death who slew the Egyptian first-born might spare the Jewish first-born. The matzoth suggest an agricultural spring festival, the lamb-bone a shepherd spring festival. We know that in Jewish history pastoral and agricultural civilization met, and in these symbols we see the blending of the two.

The last day of Passover has become the occasion for a memorial service. In some synagogues this service takes place on the Sabbath during the festival. For Passover, as for all Jewish holy days, special readings from the Torah and the prophets are prescribed for the services.

Shavuoth

Seven weeks after the first day of Passover occurs the Festival of Weeks, sometimes known as the Festival of Pentecost. It is the festival of the first fruits. In ancient days, when the early harvest was brought in, men hastened to place part of it on the altar in gratitude to God. Jewish tradition came to associate this festival with the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. It was believed that on the first Shavuoth Moses stood on Sinai and received from God the Ten Commandments and the rest of the written and oral law. Thus Shavuoth became the birthday of Judaism.

Whether Moses stood on Sinai on that day or not is comparatively unimportant. At one time or other Judaism had a birthday, and the beautiful tradition associated with Shavuoth makes that holy day a glorious time in which to celebrate the founding of the faith. In Reform temples, the confirmation of young people into the fold of Judaism takes place on Shavuoth. They stand at the altar and

pledge their allegiance to the one God and to one humanity, as tradition asserts their fathers did centuries ago around Sinai. The Shavuoth festival concludes the Jewish religious reason. It is the last of the major festivals.

The Sabbath

Throughout the year, commencing on Friday evening and ending on Saturday evening, the Sabbath is celebrated. In view of the new interpretations of Judaism the Sabbath observance varies. Many congregations hold services late on Friday evening and on Saturday morning. The late Friday service makes it possible for the worshiper to usher in the Sabbath at home with his family before coming to the house of God. A beautiful traditional home service has been modernized. The candles are lit by the mother, the children are blessed by father and mother, and all drink from the cup of sanctification.

The observance of the Sabbath has become exceedingly difficult in a complex civilization which makes Saturday a workday. Many Jews no longer pay any attention to the Sabbath, and with its deterioration and disappearance have gone many spiritual values. The Sabbath was an excellent discipline and a reminder each week for man of his divine nature, his noble mission and his infinite promise. Somehow or other the synagogue will have to devise means of giving fresh vitality to the Sabbath so that its riches may become available in an age of machinery and clamant material forces. There is no question but that a strengthening of the Sabbath would bring about a strengthening of the spiritual values of prophetic religion.

Anti-Semitism

If Judaism is so noble a faith, if it has won such wide approval in so many lands and ages, why is it that Jews have so frequently been persecuted? Examples are, alas, too many and need not be repeated. The persecution initiated

by modern Germany is merely the most cruel and hideous in a long, long history of cruel oppression.

The word "anti-Semitism," denoting hostility toward the Jew, is comparatively new. It was unknown until a French writer referred to the Jews as Semites and to the Semites as an inferior race. "Semite" and "Aryan" were terms used in the world of scholarship to distinguish between groups of languages. Then they were applied to races — altogether erroneously, for to speak a certain language does not imply descent from the creators of that language. This book is written in English, but I am not a descendant of Englishmen, and the same is probably true of many of my readers. Those who speak French are not necessarily of French ancestry.

In this connection, it may be well to point out that scholars are convinced that there are no pure races in the world today. This applies to the Jews as well as to all other peoples. Jews or Christians who speak of the purity of the Jewish race are speaking the language of romance, fiction, imagination — anything but the language of fact. By race, of course, is meant common physical ancestry. All of Jewish history tends to prove that the Jews are a mixed race. The Bible record of early Hebrew history knows nothing of opposition to intermarriage. Moses did not marry a Hebrew. The kings took foreign wives, and no great Jewish teacher objected. The ban on intermarriage was motivated not by any desire to press racial purity but by the hope of preserving the faith. When that ban was enacted the Jews were already a hopelessly mixed people. Again, Judaism was a missionary faith; it sought converts and made many. There are records of kings and their subjects who accepted the faith of Israel in a body. These converts were admitted to the synagogue and they added fresh racial strains to its children. It is obvious to anyone today that many racial types are represented among Jews. There are blond Jews and brunette Jews, Jews with long heads and Jews with

round heads, tall Jews and short Jews, blue-eyed Jews and black-eyed Jews.

But though there is no Jewish race, anti-Semitism is a fact, a harsh fact which must be faced. It is, however, no unique phenomenon. Others besides Jews have been persecuted in the course of history. Nor is persecution an evidence of taint, weakness, or physical or mental inferiority on the part of the persecuted. Not infrequently those who were oppressed in one age were honored in the next. It is no exaggeration to state that among the victims have been the noblest spirits humanity has produced. Moses was persecuted; Jesus was persecuted; Socrates, Jeremiah, Mohammed, Confucius, John Hus, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln — all were persecuted. Jews were persecuted in ancient Rome, were fed to the lions and compelled to worship in catacombs. This was true of Christians likewise. Many indeed have been the Christian martyrs. Catholics have been persecuted. Protestants have been persecuted. The champions of liberty in medieval Europe were persecuted. The founders of the United States were persecuted. The progressive spirits in Germany have been persecuted.

What causes persecution? Why has it been so universal a phenomenon? Let me answer with an illustration from the animal kingdom. If a white wolf associates himself with a pack of black wolves, under normal circumstances he will be welcomed — will move with the pack, feed with it and be admitted to full-fledged membership. However, should a severe winter come and food prove difficult to find, the starving pack will begin to devour each other, and invariably the white wolf will be the first to be torn limb from limb. Why will the wolves first single out that one of their comrades who is different? Because they have a native dislike of the unlike.

Human beings too have this innate dislike of the unlike. With whom do we associate? With people who are most like us, who belong to our social class, who are members

of our church or temple, of our country club, of our industry; people who share our interests and like to do what we like to do. It is natural to think that one's own group is the best group; it satisfies our vanity and makes us smugly content. Other groups, we think, are less attractive, able, decent, enterprising or worthy than ours. This is a universal spiritual failing, rising from the fact that people who differ from us seem to challenge our security and the way of life on which we have built our destiny.

For example, there is no rational reason why Americans born to the English language should look down upon Americans whose native tongue is Italian. Italian is a great language. Dante's poetry was written in it. Italian culture produced a Michelangelo, a Da Vinci, a Garibaldi. Yet many English-speaking Americans think that men and women born in Italy are inferior to them. The same prejudice is to be seen in the attitude of white men toward the colored peoples. White men have smugly assumed that their race is superior while the colored races are inferior — oblivious, for example, of the greatness of Chinese culture, with its profound philosophy and its technical inventions, or of the remarkable adaptability shown by the Japanese, who in a fraction of a century have marched from the age of feudalism to modern industrialism. Dislike of the unlike is universal and completely irrational.

When times are normal, the unlike minority group, racial, religious or national, will be tolerated. When times are good it will be welcomed and made to feel at home. But in times of crisis, military, economic or political, when men and women keenly feel their insecurity, they will look for something on which to blame their troubles. They refuse to face their own inadequacy and admit their own guilt. They become suspicious of the minorities in their midst and discriminate against them, persecute them or seek to destroy them. Agitation against foreigners increases in times of unemployment. Race riots occur when jobs are

scarce. Lynchings are frequent in periods of economic stress. And in periods of national calamity, such as military defeat or threat of famine, minorities are in great jeopardy. This hostility is always rationalized. Good reasons are discovered to justify prejudices and bigotries, and the mind is enslaved to atavistic emotions. The charges against the persecuted group are always the same. Anti-Catholic or anti-Protestant propaganda resembles anti-Jewish propaganda.

During the Middle Ages, the Black Death swept over Europe and decimated the population of many communities. Strong men and women perished overnight from a sickness which the medical science of that day could neither understand nor cope with. Today we know the causes of the Black Death — the bubonic plague, as we call it. It comes from the unsanitary areas of the world, frequently from the Orient, and is usually carried by rats. It can be eliminated by simply exterminating its carriers. Dr. Victor Heisser, in his book *An American Doctor's Odyssey,* tells how he taught the Philippines this method of eradicating the dread disease. But the Middle Ages knew nothing of bacteria or disease-carriers. So the report was spread, and readily accepted, that the Jews had poisoned the wells of communities visited by the plague. The Jews were exiled, persecuted or slain.

In Russia, when the czar's rule proved exceptionally harsh and the masses of serfs grew sullen, the government would divert the wrath of the populace from itself to the Jews and initiate the pogroms, those hideous massacres of innocent, helpless children of the synagogue. Europe has always had groups of Jews to serve as convenient scapegoats on which the frustrated wrath of a people could expend itself. It is one of the sad facts of human nature that an individual's wrath over his own shortcomings may find satisfaction in inflicting pain upon others, thus demonstrating his power and building up his own ego. A person who

whips a child may subconsciously be compensating for his own inadequacies. A teacher's harshness toward her pupils may be compensation for the frustrations of her own life. A nation like Germany, humiliated and crushed by military defeat, may find a perverse satisfaction in tormenting a minority like the Jews in its midst.

That Jews are more likely to be persecuted in a Christian than in a non-Christian environment should not surprise us. Family quarrels are often more bitter and more difficult to settle than quarrels between strangers, perhaps because in family quarrels the emotions are more involved. Judaism and Christianity are of the same spiritual family. Christianity grew out of Judaism. But they quarreled and separated. Missionary pamphlets became sacred documents and their slander of the Jew, whom they made the villain of the crucifixion, was given the stamp of ecclesiastical authority. Ever since the relationships between church and synagogue have revealed anything but that love and justice which both insist are their cardinal teaching. A Chinese, a Confucianist, once asked me to make clear to him the difference between Judaism and Christianity. I did so to the best of my ability, but a puzzled look remained on his face. He could not see the difference, he could not believe that there is an abyss, wide and deep, between church and synagogue. Is not the same thing true of Catholicism and Protestantism? Think of the hatred between their adherents, the cruelties practiced by each side upon the other. Then we can understand the difficulty between the church and the synagogue. It is a family quarrel and not easily to be settled.

Unscrupulous men, anxious to manipulate their fellows, have exploited the historic hostility between Judaism and Christianity. They knew that it is easier to rally people around hate than around love. They have used hatred of the Jew as a means of securing mastery over those susceptible to hatred of the Jew. But the haters were trapped by

their hatred. Not only their victims were destroyed, but they themselves. Modern Germany offers a perfect example. Hitler used anti-Semitism to obtain leadership among a people who had been conditioned against Jews by the ancient quarrel between church and synagogue and by the fact that the Jews were different. Hitler encouraged this hatred and built a party around it. That party destroyed the German republic and robbed the Germans of their freedom, and in the end will probably all but destroy Germany.

There is no doubt that Jews are different from the peoples in whose midst they live, but they are different only religiously. On matters of economics, politics and national affairs Jews differ among themselves just as other men and women do. Their differences in these respects are determined by their circumstances, their education and similar influences. Only religion distinguishes them from their fellows. But being different religiously is not only no crime; it is a moral right and a spiritual duty. To profess a belief one does not sincerely hold is to live a lie and destroy one's character. But in stressful times this religious difference has been enough to inflame the ever latent dislike of the unlike.

The current charges against Jews are novel only in form, and precisely as valid as such charges generally are. Like the slanders and accusations made by oppressing majorities against the minorities they persecute, they are attempts to justify persecution. The Jews are accused of being internationalists. What great religion is not international-minded? Is not the Roman Catholic Church as international as Judaism? Is not the Protestant church, with its far-flung missionary enterprises, international in its sympathies? The Jews are accused of possessing most of the world's wealth. The fact is that the overwhelming majority of Jews live on the verge of poverty, and because of their exposed position are the first to feel the

pinch of economic depression. The great world fortunes are not in Jewish hands. The Fords, the Mellons, the Rockefellers, the Vanderbilts, are not children of the synagogue. To be sure, there are many Jewish middlemen. The worker and the farmer give a large proportion of their earnings to the middleman, unaware of the fact that the money does not remain with him. The Jews are accused of exerting undue power in the world. Nazi Germany has demolished that myth. Where was Jewish power when the nazis crushed the Jews of Germany without any interference? Other accusations against the Jews cancel each other out in the mind of any rational person. In some quarters, Jews are accused of being too radical, in others of being too conservative; in some of being too pacifistic, in others of being too militaristic; in some of being arch capitalists, in others of being arch communists; in some of being uncreative, in others of dominating the creative life of a nation.

What are Jews? A weak minority wherever they live, and therefore an effective barometer of civilization. A civilization is tested and tried by its treatment of the weak in its midst. It is a fact of history that where Jews have prospered, the peoples among whom they lived have prospered and civilization has made progress; and where Jews have suffered, the persecutors have suffered and their civilization has gone backward. Anti-Semites have always been destroyers, not creators; warmongers, not peace-makers; tyrants, not emancipators; exponents of barbarism, not champions of civilization. In Germany they have destroyed freedom. In the France of Dreyfus they sought to restore the Bourbon monarchy and to stifle the gains made for liberty by the French Revolution. In Russia they were the minions of the czars and kept a hundred and eighty million people in an outmoded feudalism. In America the scouts of anti-Semitism are the foes of the nation's freedom. The destruction of the Jew is only their incidental goal. They seek to destroy the liberty of every American and to nullify

the teachings of Jefferson, Washington and Lincoln. Woe to the nation which yields to anti-Semitism! It will be visited by justice, for anti-Semitism is a snare and a delusion. The Jew is only the lure with which the trap is baited. Woe to the people that puts its foot into the trap! Woe to its freedom and its destiny!

How then can anti-Semitism be overcome? Jews can make the spread of anti-Semitic propaganda more difficult by declaring before the world the tenets of prophetic religion — its convictions about one God, one humanity, and justice and peace for all. They can put these ideals into practice and become living exemplars thereof. Not that Jews must live under a delusion. If all Jews were saints and there were no sinners among them, persecution would yet come. Saintliness gives no immunity against blind hatred and irrational violence. By enlightening the world about Jews and Judaism, by living heroically the prophetic way of life, Jews can put obstacles in the march of anti-Semitism, but they alone can never overcome it. Their fate lies in the character of the human race. If, as Judaism teaches, men are fundamentally decent and possess divine potentialities, then those qualities cannot for long be crushed. They may be temporarily obscured, but they can never be eliminated. For man is made in the image of God. Even as God cannot be destroyed, so the divinity in men cannot be annihilated. The Jew must await the reawakening of the Godlike in the human race.

It is frequently said — and Jews have been foremost in urging this — that persecution has been good for the Jews. It has toughened them and has drawn them together. It has made them seek the shelter of religion. It alone accounts for their survival. In *How Odd of God* Lewis Browne has defended this thesis, asserting that the Jew will disappear when hatred of him disappears. If we are to believe him, anti-Semitism has been the driving impulse behind Judaism and the Jewish struggle for survival.

But what are the facts concerning the effects of anti-Semitism on the Jew? Anti-Semitism promotes the fear of man, and that is not a heroic impulse which will keep a people alive or an institution functioning. The fear of man is a paralyzing impulse. It destroys spirituality, freezes creativeness and makes cringing cowards of upright men. The blight which anti-Semitism has fastened on Jewish life can be seen even in America today. Some Jews have become obsessed by it. They live in a state of frenzy and terror. They are willing to make any terms with the anti-Semite if only they may be spared persecution. They are prepared to forswear every principle, every conviction, every ideal to save themselves and their dear ones from hatred and discrimination. One such Jewish leader even suggested that if the synagogue insists on emphasizing an international ideal when nationalism is rampant, or social justice when privileged groups repudiate it, or racial equality when bigotry stalks the land, then perhaps it should be closed and silenced, lest by its espousal of these prophetic ideals it bring death and destruction upon all its sons. That is the effect of persecution upon Jews.

Jews should be moved not by the fear of man but by the fear of God; not by anti-Semitism but by Judaism; not by the whims of privileged groups but by the teachings of the prophets. These are the creative sources of Jewish life, and their expression is hampered and hindered when Jewish energies are diverted to self-defense. Anti-Semitism threatens to cripple the Jew in his world ministry, and that is its most sinister threat.

It is significant that the present campaign against the Jew is based on the Jewish race, when there is no Jewish race. What the anti-Semites of today most dread is Jewish idealism. The Jewish notion of one God and one humanity stands in the way of their national vanity, their racial madness, their imperialism. When they say they are destroying the Jewish race they are seeking to destroy everything the

Jews have created — the Old Testament in the synagogue, but also the New Testament in the church; Moses and Isaiah, but also Jesus and St. Paul; the Psalms of David, but also the Beatitudes of Jesus. Modern anti-Semitism is the Goliath of the twentieth century seeking to crush the David of history. If David is crushed it will be only temporarily, for God is on his side. David will triumph when he espouses the cause of justice for all mankind, which was the cause of the prophets, and theirs by reason of being the cause of God.

Zionism

In one sense Jews have always been Zionists. Love of the land of Israel's birth is bred in their bone and marrow. The exiles in Babylon yearned for Zion, and the prophets spoke in glowing terms of its beauty. The messianic hope was linked with the return to Palestine, and the resurrection of the dead was bound up with it. Through the centuries pious Jews made pilgrimages to the holy land and prayed to be buried in its sacred soil. The medieval poet and philosopher Jehuda Halevi voiced the Jew's nostalgia for the land of Israel in a series of memorable poems. Under the leadership of Shabbatai Zevi and other false messiahs, thousands of Jews gave up their belongings to return to Palestine. In the days of persecution the most stirring word of the Seder service was, "Next year in Jerusalem as free men." Jews read about Zion in their literature, sang about it in their songs and remembered it in their daily prayers.

Political Zionism however, which seeks to restore a Jewish state in Palestine, is a relatively new thing. Although it grew out of Judaism, many of its leading adherents have been secularists and regard the movement as a purely political one. It did not originate among deeply religious Jews, but merely capitalized on the age-old yearning for Israel's birthplace. The movement had its start in Russia during

the reign of the liberal czar Alexander II. Under his rule the Russian Jews came to hope that they would be fully emancipated — that they would be given a chance to participate on an equal basis in the nation's life, that the ghettoes would be closed and the schools opened to them, that, in short, they would be allowed to become full-fledged citizens, differing from other Russians only in respect to their religion. Under the impetus of this hope was founded the movement known as Haskalah — "Enlightenment" — which urged Russian Jews to accept the modern spirit. Its leaders believed that Russia would become their fatherland and they its loyal sons.

Unfortunately for them, the liberal czar was assassinated and a wave of reaction and intolerance set in. All hope for freedom in Russia faded from the Jewish horizon. In gloom and despair, the leaders of Haskalah came to the conclusion that there was no hope for the Jew in Russia or anywhere in Europe. They argued that the Jews must not look for a czar to emancipate them, but must emancipate themselves. They spoke in favor of what they called auto-emancipation. As they saw it, the only way to end the persecution of the Jew was for him to re-create a state of his own where he would be free from discrimination and his sufferings would be only the common sufferings of human beings endeavoring to adjust themselves to a bewildering universe. So they began to urge the resettlement of Palestine and the re-establishment of a Jewish state there.

Similar experiences led Theodor Herzl, who is considered the founder of the Zionist movement, to write his now historic book, *The Jewish State,* in which he pointed out that the Jew has no future in Europe and predicted the terrible fate that, under Hitler, has actually overtaken European Jewry. Herzl urged that immediate steps be taken for the rebuilding of a Jewish state in Palestine. To this end he called the first Zionist congress, which met in

Basle, Switzerland, in 1897 and issued a pronunciamento now known as the Basle Program.

Herzl was not interested in the Jewish religion. He belonged to that coterie of European intellectuals who believed that life could be lived without church or synagogue. He was a gifted pamphleteer and the literary critic for one of Vienna's finest newspapers. In 1894, his editor sent him to Paris to report the now famous trial of Alfred Dreyfus, the Jewish artillery captain who, as subsequent events proved, had been unjustly accused of treason and was railroaded to prison. As Herzl sat in the correspondents' box and observed on what flimsy evidence an innocent man was convicted, he realized that if Dreyfus had been a member of the church he would never have been molested. Seeing how powerful political groups sought to make use of the case to rouse anti-Semitism and, under cover of this hatred of the Jew, to destroy the French republic, he became convinced that so long as the Jew remained on the European scene he would be the cat's-paw of warring political groups and the scapegoat for every national and international calamity. Therefore he determined to lead the Jew out of his perennial difficulties as a member of a minority by establishing him in Palestine as a majority. Out of Herzl's efforts came the modern Zionist movement, the Balfour Declaration and the present resettlement of Palestine.

But all Jews did not accept Herzl's defeatist views. Many did not regard themselves as members of a Jewish nation. They thought of themselves as nationals of the country in which they lived, though their religion was Judaism. Others recognized that the prophetic tradition had both a national and a universal tendency, but considered the universal tradition the higher one and were not interested in the establishment of a Jewish nation. They accepted the concept of Jewish destiny set forth by the prophet of the exile, who taught that the Jew had a mission to teach

the peoples of the world the belief in one God. They looked upon the destruction of the temple and the dispersal of the Jews as part of the divine plan toward realizing that mission. Both these groups vigorously opposed the Zionist movement. The strongest support for Zionism came from sections of Europe where Jews were being actively persecuted, or from emigrants from those parts who had personal memories of persecution. In Germany Zionism was at first weak. Its strength there grew with the growth of Hitlerism.

Within the Zionist movement there are many interpretations of its significance. Some Zionists think in purely political terms. They aim to establish in Palestine a Jewish nation which will take its place alongside France, Spain, Denmark, Italy, Finland and the other nations of the world. Some Zionists have a higher conception of nationalism. They declare that the Jewish state must be a theocracy, a religious state in which Orthodoxy is supreme. Still others insist that the Jewish state must be a utopian commonwealth where there will be no capitalism, no private ownership and no class divisions. The essayist and philosopher Achad Haam (Asher Ginsburg) is the father of what is known as cultural Zionism. He advocated the founding of a Jewish state in Palestine in order that the Jewish spirit might have a milieu in which it could express itself fully, free from all non-Jewish influences, and there create a civilization in harmony with the teachings of the prophets. He believed that the plan for the ideal community which came out of Zion would first be realized in Zion by the sons of Zion, to be a model for the world. The Jewish mission would be fulfilled in and through a Jewish state.

So far as the actual accomplishments of the new Jewish community in Palestine are concerned, fragments of all these views have been realized. Idealists have tried to establish modern cooperative communities, with much success. Orthodox groups have been able to practice their

faith, but have not succeeded in imposing it upon all the Jews in Palestine. The Palestine labor movement has been progressive and creative and shows much promise. A great Jewish university has been established which is bringing the culture of the Occident to the Orient, as in another age Jews brought the culture of the Orient to the Occident. Modern science, medicine and industry have been introduced. The new community has evinced remarkable energy and vitality. Many of its members reveal a courageous pioneering spirit and an admirable devotion and self-sacrifice. The land has been transformed and some of its fruitfulness restored. Over five hundred thousand Jews have found a home there, and millions of the persecuted Jews of Europe look upon it as a haven. Its future — barring the interference of British imperialism — is promising.

There have been difficulties between Jews and Arabs, owing to a variety of causes: the inevitable frictions between groups who have different aspirations, the hostility of Arab leaders to Jewish political ambitions, the energy and aggressiveness of the Jews, the resentment of Arab feudal lords against the sense of dignity which Jewish workers have conveyed to Arab workers, the activities of foreign propagandists. Mistakes have been made by Jews and Arabs alike. The problem is not solved, but this is clear: that no settlement which relies on bayonets, British or other, can ever be worth while, and that any settlement based on injustice to the Arabs would be a violation of Jewish idealism. If Jew and Arab were left alone, without imperialistic or foreign interference, they could work out an adjustment which would satisfy Jewish aspirations without doing injustice to the Arabs. Already the coming of the Jews has greatly improved the lot of the Arabs in Palestine.

Zionism has brought a certain vitality to Jewish life in many sections, but it is the vitality of nationalism, not of universalism. It is true that a dedicated nationalism can be universal. Thus far however the nationalism inspired by

the Zionist movement has differed very little from that evident in other nations. It is a narrow loyalty of clan and tribe, and as such comes under the criticism of prophetic religion. The highest loyalty in the Jewish tradition is loyalty to God and to humanity. In the efficient propaganda and frenzied appeals of official Zionism the note of tribalism is too frequently dominant, while the note of universalism is unheard. In this respect Zionism has been a liability to prophetic religion. But meanwhile it has created a haven for a half-million Jews, who have established in the Middle East an exemplary community under whose aegis many prophetic reforms have been instituted and some of the choicest prophetic spirits have been nurtured. Perhaps Zionism is destined to develop a prophetic nationalism which will one day recover the universalism without which the Jew and Judaism lose their significance.

Democracy

On the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia are inscribed the words, " Proclaim ye liberty throughout the land, and unto all the inhabitants thereof " — a verse taken from the Book of Leviticus, from the historic chapter which legislates for the establishment of the jubilee year, the emancipation of all and the redivision of the land. A committee of the Continental Congress, seeking to devise a seal for the new nation, suggested that it show the children of Israel rejoicing after their escape across the Red Sea. This linking of liberty with the Old Testament is not accidental. The American colonists who sought freedom from Great Britain were tremendously influenced by the democratic tendency evident in the pages of the Bible. There is a close spiritual affinity between Judaism and democracy. In fact the ideal of democracy is more a religious than a political concept. It roots in the belief in one God who has made all men in his image. This belief, the Magna Charta of freedom, antedates by many centuries the English Magna Charta or the

American Bill of Rights. If all men have one Father, then all men have equal rights, all men are sacred personalities, all men should be free from tyranny and exploitation.

In the sphere of politics, democracy is a reaffirmation of faith in the dignity of man, a vote of confidence in man. Democracy heralds man's capacity to govern himself. It asserts that he is not a tool to be used or abused, or a beast to be regimented and herded. Man is the master and not the slave of the state, the creator and not the pawn of government. Liberty is far more important to him than comfort and security. Theoretically at least, a benevolent despotism may provide security, though it is the security that cattle are given by the farmer who milks them, robs them of their young and eventually slaughters them for their meat. But it is questionable whether any despotism can long remain benevolent. In the long run the individual can better be trusted to be the judge of his own welfare than the despot, for the individual is concerned about himself, while the despot regards his subjects as merely bricks and mortar in the edifice of his power.

That democracy was part of the vital faith of Israel is attested by history. When Moses found the task of governing too great he summoned representatives of all the tribes to assist him, thus instituting a form of representative government. When the covenant was given at Sinai it was accepted not merely by Moses but by all the people, even the least of them, so that all had a voice in expressing their approval of it. Here is a popular referendum in a world where tyranny and despotism prevailed. Samuel warned the Israelites against setting up a royal dynasty. The prophets were in revolt against the aristocratic priesthood. Even Amos, the humble shepherd and tender of sycamore trees, could receive the crown of prophecy and become one of the immortal teachers of his people. When Ezra and Nehemiah instituted the reading of the Torah to the masses they initiated popular education. They wanted every Jew to

know the moral law and to feel responsible for obeying it; for democracy means not merely the right to govern oneself but also the willingness to share responsibility. The rabbis, the leaders and teachers of the people, were not members of any dynasty. They were selected purely on the basis of their character and intellectual ability. The son of a shoemaker, if he showed any talent for the rabbinate, was encouraged and supported by the community. The same democracy is evident in the synagogue today. Any Jew, ordained or not, is qualified to lead in prayer. Judaism has always insisted that no man is closer to God than any other man.

Through the Bible the democratic ideal was disseminated in Europe. (It is no accident that the worst tyrannies of the modern era existed in lands where the Bible was not read.) It took some time for the ideal to manifest itself. It flowed like a subterranean river in the caverns of history until the hour came when it broke into the light of day. The Renaissance with its emphasis on the importance of the individual gave it artistic and literary expression. The Protestant Reformation with its emphasis on the rights of conscience and the capacity of man to reach God without a mediating hierarchy carried it into a wider arena. It became articulate in the French and American revolutions and in the growth of liberty in England. These three developments were the major factor in the political emancipation of the European Jew. Here is the justice of history. The Jew, the creator of the democratic ideal, was liberated when the ideal he fostered found expression in the lives of men.

In the modern world two philosophies have arisen to challenge this way of life — fascism and communism. Both conflict in full or in part with the democracy of the prophets. Both seek to destroy freedom — fascism in order to prevent the attainment of social justice, communism in order to accelerate it. Fascism disbelieves in democracy and

crushes it; communism believes in democracy but suspends it.

But the only guarantee that a society can have that its rulers will not become tyrannical, no matter how benevolent their promises, is for men to retain in their own hands the right of government. Without democracy there can be no social justice. Unless government is by the people it will not be for the people, as Abraham Lincoln knew so well. Today clamorous voices declare that democracy is doomed, that like feudalism in another era it marked a stage in history, but has had its day and now must pass. This view Judaism rejects. Democracy rests not on the whims and caprices of man but on the reality of God, the Father of all in whose sight all men are equal. Because its basis is spiritual, democracy is eternal, even as God is eternal.

It is said that the tyrannical philosophies of Europe are bound to conquer America, not by force of arms but by force of propaganda. But those who make this prediction understand neither the spiritual nature of the democratic ideal nor the caliber of the American people and the power of its tradition. Before either fascism or communism can triumph in this land our Constitution will have to be torn to tatters, our Declaration of Independence burned in public bonfires, our national heroes repudiated, Bunker Hill and Valley Forge forgotten, the memory of Washington, Jefferson and Lincoln obliterated. We Americans have a hundred and fifty years' experience of democratic government — seven or eight generations accustomed to going to the polls and expressing their views on public policy, children nurtured on the food of freedom. No other country has a tradition like this.

I, a child of the synagogue, know the power of a spiritual tradition. Who were my fathers? Outcasts in the European scene, denied the right to live in decent houses along with their Christian neighbors, prevented from engaging in

respectable occupations, barred from association with other decent people, branded with the yellow badge, humiliated and persecuted. What did they possess that enabled them to survive? They had no political power, no armies and navies, no wealth. All they had was their Bible and prayer book, which gave them faith in God and in the ultimate triumph of justice. That faith was stronger than walled cities, knightly armor or steel-plated battleships. That faith was their shield and their strength. It gave them the courage and the power to survive.

Though I live in an age of towering skyscrapers and giant industrial plants, of mighty steel bridges and leviathan ships, of swift-speeding airplanes and radio that moves fast as thought, I know that a spiritual tradition is more powerful than these. It cannot be seen or weighed, but it is real and it has enduring strength. Democracy is of God; therefore to it belong the victory and the triumph. Born in the soul of Israel's prophets, it will one day enter the souls of all peoples and strike the shackles from all the children of men.

Race Relations

The attitude of prophetic religion toward race is clear and succinct. The prophet Malachi voiced it effectively in the words, " Have we not one Father? Has not one God created us all? " Judaism sanctions no racial bigotry or discrimination, no assumptions of racial superiority or inferiority. All human beings, whatever their ancestry, whatever the color of their skins, are equal in the sight of God. All bear the imprint of his divine image. The ideal of world brotherhood rests squarely on this belief in the equality of men.

But however noble this teaching, it is not followed in popular practice. The white race particularly has offended against it. Many whites regard Indians and Negroes, Chinese and Japanese, Arabs and Hindus as inferior peoples

who may therefore be exploited, denied economic privileges, deprived of their liberties, used as pawns in the chess game of imperialism; the natural resources of whose lands may be confiscated, whose sons may be forced to fight in conscript armies, and whose wealth may be drained away to maintain in luxury a white aristocracy. The existence of colonies, the treatment of the Negro in the United States, the so-called Oriental exclusion law (recently amended to permit Chinese to become American citizens, but still maintaining the bar against all other Orientals) are proof of tragic moral failure on the part of those who profess the Hebrew-Christian religion.

Sometimes it is argued that in this respect religion has held up an ideal of perfection which is not only impossible of realization but is based on false science. Spokesmen for this point of view insist, with a show of evidence, that the colored races are inferior, and similarly brand certain groups of whites. This is indeed a serious challenge for religion, for it denies the justice of God. Why should God have been unjust to Negroes, for example? How can they be expected to love and believe in a God of all humanity if he plays favorites and assigns to them the role of slaves in the history of mankind? Religion would not be true to itself if it denied the equality of races.

As to science, true science sustains the view of religion. The science that supports popular prejudices is the false science. Anthropology and history offer abundant evidence for the fact that there is no such thing as a superior or an inferior race. In the field of anthropology, the best judgment on the matter is that of the so-called American school, led by the distinguished Columbia scientist, the late Professor Franz Boas. Boas' disciples contend, first, that there are no pure races. In the course of history all races have been hopelessly intermingled. Second, they show that where racial groups are sharply set apart, forty per cent of the members in one group will be very much like forty per

cent in the other. The differences among individuals are far more perceptible than the differences among races, and individual differences exist within racial groups. Finally, they prove that the differences among races are due to environment and historical circumstances, not to inborn inequalities. This school classifies races as advanced and backward rather than as superior and inferior — a classification which is both morally and scientifically significant. An inferior race can never become superior; it lacks fundamental abilities. But a backward race can become advanced.

History amply verifies this thesis. Consider, for example, the Arabs. Some years ago when in the Holy Land I observed that most Europeans, Jewish as well as Christian, regarded the Arab population of Palestine as inferior, and as a matter of fact there seemed to be some ground for this attitude. Miserable indeed was the plight of the fellahin, who lived as primitively as did their ancestors centuries ago. Yet there was a time when the Arabs were the intellectual, artistic and spiritual leaders of the world. The flame of their civilization blazed from Bagdad to the Pillars of Hercules. Fired by the vision of Mohammed, imbued with a sense of world mission, they speedily set up their rule in Asia Minor, crossed over to Africa and seized its northern shore, moved into Europe by way of the Iberian peninsula and the Dardanelles, made themselves masters of what are modern Turkey and Spain, and invaded France, where their conquering march was halted by the grandfather of Charlemagne in the historic battle of Tours, which decided that the cross and not the crescent was to dominate Europe.

The Arabs of that era were the custodians of the light and learning of humanity. Greek scholars driven from Europe found refuge for themselves and their manuscripts in Moslem universities. Jews living among the Arabs be-

came acquainted with the Greek classics, brought them back to Florence, translated them into Latin under the patronage of the Medici, and thus inaugurated the Renaissance, which was to bear fruit in the Protestant Reformation and the American and French revolutions. But the Arabs made more direct contributions. They laid the foundations of many modern sciences of which all of us are the beneficiaries. In arithmetic, we still use arabic numerals. In astronomy, words like nadir, zenith, apogee reveal the Arabic origin of that science. In medicine the Arabs made significant discoveries. One can almost imagine the civilized ancestors of modern Palestinian Arabs looking down with contempt on the ignorant and illiterate Europeans. Centuries have passed since the days when Arab culture was at its height. The advanced Arabs of one age have become the backward people of another, and the backward Europeans of one century have become the advanced people of this.

Who were my ancestors? Assuming that I am a descendant of nomadic Hebrew tribes who eked out a bare existence on the oases of the desert between Palestine and Egypt, I come of an uncouth, primitive and backward people. These nomadic tribes, warlike and fierce, were attracted by the fertile valleys of the Nile and the Jordan. A few of them seized and briefly settled on the borders of Egypt, only to be enslaved and finally driven out. Other tribes entered Palestine and sought to subdue it. There they came into contact with a more advanced people. The Canaanites were farmers who had a settled civilization and tools and implements unknown to the desert nomads, and despised the rude invaders. But in a few centuries the sons of the desert had mastered the land, produced a few great spirits who are revered throughout the civilized world (one of them even worshiped), created a unique sacred literature, and so associated significant events with Palestine that it

became known as the holy land. A change of environment made possible the transformation of crude nomads into a people with unquestioned religious genius.

Did not the Greeks look with scorn and contempt on the Romans who captured their cities and destroyed their independence? And the Romans in turn — what did they think of the ancestors of modern Europeans? Julius Caesar called the inhabitants of France, Germany and England barbarians, and his legions rode roughshod over them. Imperial Rome regarded as scarcely human the Goths and Visigoths who swept out of the northern forests and laid low the empire. But the sons of the barbarians created significant civilizations. The student of history knows it is not altogether impossible that, if the advanced nations of today destroy themselves with the weapons they have made — as they seem bent on doing, for they appear to lack the moral and spiritual power to use them for the benefit of humanity —, there will emerge from the jungles of Africa, the deserts of Asia or the lonely islands of the Pacific some backward people which will advance to the leadership of humanity's caravan.

It is sometimes urged that the American Negro disproves the thesis of Boas and his followers, for though he lives in an advanced civilization he yet remains backward. The fact is however that the Negro is allowed only a limited share in the nation's life. He is discriminated against from the moment of birth. His America and the America of the white man are entirely different. His backwardness is due not to a lack of fundamental capacity, but to a lack of opportunity. When the Negro is given the same opportunity that other Americans have he too will advance and thus vindicate the teaching of prophetic religion — that in the sight of God all men are equal, that God knows no color preference and has not eternally handicapped any of the children of men. For verily, " have we not one Father? Has not one God created us all? "

Jewish Missionary Enterprises

Prophetic religion contains the seed of missions. A polytheistic world which recognized many gods could hardly be stirred to seek converts, for it was a matter of indifference what god one worshiped. The urge to convert grows out of the nature of monotheism. " Who is like unto thee, O God, among the gods? " exclaims a biblical verse, thus declaring that there is a greatest among the gods. Then comes the assertion of the Shema, that God is one. But if there is only one God, then all men who would worship must worship him. Those who adore other gods are worshiping falsehood.

The Second Isaiah, the prophet of the exile, was the first to think in terms of making the Jews a missionary people who were to endeavor to convert all humanity to worship of the one God. The Torah was written not merely to keep Judaism alive for the Jews, but also to be used as a manual in making converts. The translation of the Bible into Greek by Jews was intended not merely to make its treasures available to Greek-speaking Jews, but also for circulation in the Greek world, to win adherents of Greek philosophy to ethical monotheism. Philo, the famous Greco-Jewish philosopher, even wrote a manual for Jewish proselytes.

There is much historical evidence that Judaism early launched a vigorous and successful missionary campaign. The king of Adiabene and his subjects were converted to Judaism in a body. There is also a record of the conversion of the Chazar tribes in southern Russia. The New Testament refers to the tirelessness of Jewish missionaries. A number of Roman writers deplore the growth of the " Jewish superstition." (Being unable to understand how people could worship an invisible God, they asserted that Judaism was a superstition whose adherents worshiped nothing.) Seneca and Strabo complain of the increase of

Jewish converts, among whom, it was rumored, was a Roman empress. Indeed even Roman emperors are said to have flirted with the idea of accepting Judaism. From India to England, synagogues were established in the endeavor to win more adherents to prophetic religion. In these synagogues the early Christians carried on their propaganda and there found their most enthusiastic disciples. As has already been pointed out, for generations Jewish and Christian missionaries were bitter rivals for supremacy in the Roman empire, and Christian missionaries imitated Jewish techniques. But in 317 C.E. Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the empire. Shortly thereafter the death penalty was decreed against Jewish proselytizers and their converts. This put an end to a thousand years of Jewish missionary effort in Europe.

Jewish missions continued in the Arab world. They failed to make Judaism the religion of the Arabs, but they won many converts to ethical monotheism and thus paved the way for Mohammedanism in Arabia as they had paved the way for Christianity in Europe. The Mohammedan slogan, " Allah is our God, and Allah is one," is vivid evidence of the impress of Jewish monotheism on the religion of the crescent.

In the modern world, Jews have thus far essayed no organized missions. In view of the difficulties which Jews have suffered for centuries, rabbis endeavor to dissuade would-be converts. They want no one to accept the faith of the synagogue without full awareness of the possible consequences in hardship and discrimination. Nevertheless there has been a not inconsiderable number of converts to Judaism in modern times, most of them coming by way of marriage.

Since the political emancipation of the Jew the synagogue has been too busy adjusting itself to the modern world to give any consideration to a missionary program. Most of its leaders would be opposed to such a program. They

would point out that the synagogues are open and the public is welcome in them. If any who are not Jews are impressed with the adequacy of Judaism and seek affiliation with it, they are free to approach the rabbi — as indeed some non-Jews have done. Again, some synagogue leaders may have felt that the emphasis on monotheism was increasing in Christianity. Many Christians have arrived at a monotheism as strict as that of the synagogue, and therefore the synagogue has nothing to offer them in the way of a purer concept of God.

In the third place, the synagogue was anxious to establish harmonious relations with the church, and these would have been marred by any vigorous Jewish missionary undertaking. It is interesting to note, incidentally, that some churches have eliminated from their liturgy prayers for the conversion of Jews. The Good Friday liturgy of the Episcopal Church included a long prayer for the conversion of Jews, and that church frequently had collections for missions to Jews. But most Episcopal churches in the United States have dropped this prayer and no longer take up the collection. Not long ago, on a Good Friday, an Episcopal rector in a certain American city offered a prayer for the cessation of Jewish persecution and collected from his congregation a large sum of money which was turned over to a European Jewish relief agency. Other Protestant groups in this country have closed their missions to Jews. One denomination, the Presbyterian, maintains them, but with no success. Because Christians and Jews recognize the common elements in their religious heritage and realize that their differences are minor and insignificant, the edge has been taken off missionary endeavors.

In all Jewish missionary efforts, one great obstacle always presented itself: the fact that prophetic religion was linked with festivals and practices which were of only local or national significance. This particularism in Jewish ritual, strict conformity with which was demanded of the convert,

impeded the spread of Judaism. The insistence on circumcision, on the keeping of feast days which commemorated events in Jewish history but were not of universal interest, on the punctilious observance of a strange and sometimes meaningless ritual, repelled many a possible convert. It is my opinion that this attitude on the part of Judaism prevented the pure ethical monotheism of the prophets from receiving the followers it would otherwise have received in Europe. It is also my opinion that Judaism could have become the religion of the Arab world if it had not been so tightly bound up with nationalistic practices.

In Judaism, particularism and universalism have been blended. The universal elements could win the homage of men everywhere, but the linking of ritual practices with eternal principles, and the refusal to compromise these practices and make concessions to local prejudices, often nullified the appeal of prophetic religion to the masses of men. Perhaps the Jewish-Christians were those Jews who recognized this difficulty. It led Paul to break with Jewish law. But Paul, in order to accommodate himself to the ancient world, added to the ethical monotheism of the prophets concessions to pagan religion, such as the deification of Jesus, which Judaism could never have countenanced. Paul's concessions made possible the spread of Christianity.

In our age, the emphasis on these concessions is being minimized in Christianity, and the purity of ethical monotheism is being stressed. Many Christians believe in the one God with the same devotion as I. Why then should I think of sending missions to them?

Social Justice

Pagan as well as prophetic religion was concerned with every phase of life. Those who declare that religion consists

of the observance of ceremony and formal services in temple or church betray an inadequate conception of the history and significance of religion. Before prophetic religion appeared the pagan world worshiped gods who were concerned with war and the movements of tribes and nations, with the produce of the field and the increase of the flock, with the erection of homes, with individual success or failure, with marriage, birth and death. These deities however were entirely wanting in moral or ethical values. The God of prophetic religion, on the other hand, was a moral God, a God of justice and love, and as such he demanded that justice and love characterize every phase of life.

No one who reads the Old Testament can question that the supreme concern of the geniuses who wrote it was that all of life be made religious. We have already pointed out that the Torah legislates about all human affairs, from the smallest to the largest. Perhaps none of its decrees records more effectively the interest of prophetic religion in economic relationships than the prescriptions for the jubilee year: " And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof; and it shall be a jubilee unto you; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family " (Lev. 25:10). Liberty was to be proclaimed — that is, slaves were to be emancipated. Every man was to return unto his possession — that is, the land of Palestine, which at the start had been equally divided among all the children of Israel, was to be redivided, so that economic equality would be re-established. This latter law was of course theoretical. Putting it into practice would have been exceedingly difficult. Some families would have died out, while others would have many children, and such a redivision might work untold hardship and result in injustice. The spirit of the law however is

important. It is proof that prophetic religion was concerned with economics and tried to find just solutions for the tangled web of human relationships in that realm.

The nineteenth chapter of Leviticus contains what may be called the first laws of charity ever codified:

> And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corner of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleaning of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather the fallen fruit of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and for the stranger.
>
> (Lev. 19:9–10)

These laws assume that protection of the poor is the concern of religion, which may regulate the harvesting of crops in their interest. In other words, for the sake of the general welfare religion may direct its influence toward matters of business and economics. All the prophets were tremendously concerned for the poor and weak. They were appalled at the abyss which stretched between the haves and the have-nots of their day. Because they believed in one God and therefore in the preciousness of every human life, they sought to bulwark human personality against the devastation wreaked upon it by the powerful and the privileged, who, as Amos put it, " sold the needy for silver and the poor for a pair of shoes."

But the prophets of Israel did not preach class warfare. They did not try to array laborer against employer, the poor against the rich. They urged no violence in bringing about changes in the social setup. Their interest was in moral values, and the only revolution they advocated was a revolution of the spirit. They wanted men to become aware of the injustice of exploitation, of the immorality of crushing the poor, of the sinfulness of tolerating hunger amid plenty. They demanded social justice in the name of the God of justice and love. Moreover, they sought justice not only for Hebrews, but also for the stranger and the

foreigner, for all men. In their eyes religion was not a mere part of life; it was all of life, and the influence of God was to permeate everything men did.

Those who carry on the religion of the prophets today cannot evade the challenge of the prophets' message. They must insist that business and industry, labor and finance submit themselves to the exacting scrutiny of the moral law. No industry however big, no task however small, is exempted from this scrutiny. Nor should individuals assume that they are qualified to scrutinize their own affairs and determine whether they are being conducted in accord with moral principles. Self-interest warps human judgment and perverts the sense of justice. It acts like a bribe in a lawsuit. Business and industry should welcome the careful examination, in the light of eternal moral principles, of their methods and practices, so that God's influence may be brought to bear on these important spheres of life. Business is sacred in the sight of God; it distributes the goods produced by farm and factory. Industry is sacred in the sight of God; it creates the mechanisms which help men live. Agriculture is sacred in the sight of God; it raises the produce whereby life is sustained. Religion does not war with business or industry or agriculture. It hails them and would urge upon their leaders the application of the principles of love and justice.

Some time ago, a preacher told me that a member of his church, a widow, had inherited $5,000 from her brother and had determined to invest the money in certain stocks which, she had been assured, would double or treble their value in a year. Thus she would have received a great many dollars for rendering no service whatever to society. Now dollars represent the resources of a nation and the labor of men. This God-fearing widow saw no ethical contradiction in the attempt to acquire for nothing the natural wealth of her country and the labor of her fellows, because this is a universal practice in the world of business.

This practice cannot receive the blessing of prophetic religion.

Here is a man who is a pious churchman or synagogue-goer. He runs a sweatshop. He pays his workers less than the standard scale. He finds means of evading the law. He becomes wealthy at the expense of other men and women. Through underpaying his workers he may make it impossible for them to have adequate food and medical care and decent homes. This man is violating the will of God. He must square his conduct in the world of business with the piety of his prayers if he would truly live in accordance with God's will.

The prophetic emphasis upon social justice has found expression in advanced and progressive philanthropic enterprises. Throughout the United States, Jewish family relief work has become the standard and the guide. Jewish lay men and women, regarding the poor and unfortunate who come to them for help as sacred and precious personalities, have tried not merely to save them from starvation and provide for their immediate needs, but to rebuild their lives, restore their confidence and give them that sense of dignity which is the birthright of every human being. This social service work has had international repercussions. Through the American Joint Distribution Committee, American Jewry has carried on relief for oppressed and starving European Jewries. Wherever the committee has sent its workers it has brought the high standards of philanthropy developed by American Jewry, especially by the Reform Jewish leaders whose rabbis preach prophetic Judaism. In Poland, Rumania and Lithuania these standards have been demonstrated in institutions founded by Americans, which in turn have helped to raise the level of philanthropic endeavor in those countries.

It is important to recognize that the Hebrew language has no word equivalent to "charity." The word that has been used is *tsedakah,* which means "righteousness."

Helping the poor is performing righteousness. Giving charity is not an expression of kindliness or goodness, but a duty prescribed by the nature of the universe and the nature of God. Whoever would be righteous must shelter and protect the widow and the orphan, the hungry and the sick. The word *tsedakah* hints perhaps at the charity of the future — not the giving of relief which is temporary but the reform of our industrial and business procedures so that all the circumstances which create unemployment and want, which prematurely crush men, will be eliminated. Unemployment insurance, old age pensions, medical care, work for all are implied in the Jewish word for charity — *righteousness.*

Not Judaism alone but Christianity likewise has recognized that the demand for social justice is inherent in prophetic religion. The popes, the heads of the Roman Catholic Church, have issued many encyclicals on economics, business and labor. The Catholic Church has what it considers a solution for conflicts between capital and labor, namely, the corporate state, which was in part adopted by fascism in Italy. Protestant churches, both individually and through their representative organization, the Federal Council of Churches, have issued strong pronouncements on social justice. For example, rabbinical councils, papal encyclicals and ministerial alliances alike have declared that collective bargaining is a sacred right because labor is not a commodity to be bought and sold like coal or iron. The worker has a concern and an interest in the industry in which he earns his livelihood. The three great religious traditions in our midst see eye to eye on the blessings which organized labor has brought. This does not mean that the leaders of organized labor are all saints. Human frailties are common to both labor leaders and bankers. Scoundrels will be found in both groups, and also honorable men concerned about the public weal and about the lives in their power.

No individual imbued with the social ideal of prophetic religion can possibly be satisfied with conditions as they are. The more religious he is, the more discontented will he be, and his discontent will find expression in action, in helping causes and movements which seek to end poverty, to do away with inadequate housing, to bring stability to our industrial system and give men that material security which is their birthright.

The Day of Atonement is the most sacred day in the Jewish religious calendar. The Central Conference of American Rabbis has incorporated in the ritual for that day a meditation on social justice which I quote in part:

While the problems of livelihood have always been urgent, never before have they pressed upon us so insistently and with such disquieting effects. What disturbs one now is not the fear that God's earth might cease to yield, but the unhappy realization of the growing discontent with the manner in which the earth's increase is shared and enjoyed by the human family. The world of commerce and industry is filled with threatening suspicions and antagonisms. Great plenty and abject poverty, limitless power and utter weakness exist side by side. These disparities are forcing themselves upon the attention of men and women as they have never done before. Everywhere earnest minds are seeking to know whether these inequalities are justified and permanent, or whether a way may not be found that shall lead to more contentment and great mutual respect and confidence the world over. In seeking a solution to those problems, we, the children of Israel, should create foremost in our minds the belief of our fathers, that human life is of the utmost value and that all duties and responsibilities have for their purpose the safeguarding of the life of man and the furtherance of his nature as a child of God. To Israel, man has always been the center of our obligations. We have been taught for ages that whatever does not serve to make our neighbor happy and confident and whatever does not dispose him to become kindly and trustful and helpful cannot receive the sanction of God and of His moral law. If our world is torn by great divisions and suspicions due to what is believed to be unfair

and unjust distribution of the world's goods, we cannot and must not regard such a condition as inevitable and normal. Surely, we cannot find in such a state of human affairs the promise of mutual appreciation and love. Our fathers have always been specially sympathetic with the hardships of those that toil. Lawgiver and prophet have warned over and over again that wealth and the possession of power tended to make men callous and insensible to the needs and struggles of others. . . . Nothing comes into the world ready made. The things that we daily enjoy must first be conceived and planned by the human mind and fashioned and formed by the human hand. Let none of us, therefore, in the pride of possession forget the true nature and source of human wealth and be unmindful of the responsibilities of power. In thinking over industrial problems and struggles, let us be on our guard against believing that the things that constitute the difficulties are in the order of nature beyond the control of man himself, for in the end, whatever troubles us in the world of business and industry has issued from personal covetousness, arrogance and cold indifference to the welfare of others. On this day of self-examination, let us search and examine our ways and in genuine integrity of mind and humility of spirit make acknowledgment that we ourselves have not been sufficiently mindful of the interests and rights of our fellowman. We have been too ready to seize upon any excuse to hold what we have and even to multiply it without due regard to the welfare of our brothers and sisters, who depend upon us. In this solemn hour, let us resolve to be helpful to the men and women who earnestly and sincerely strive to make a better world and let us on our own part seek to establish this world by such justice as shall be stimulated by generous sympathies and by such righteousness as shall be based upon genuine sacrifice.

(*Union Prayer Book,* Revised, Part II, pp. 314–17)

Judaism seeks social justice for all — for men of all denominations, of all races, of all nations. It must seek that justice so long as it regards submission to God as the duty of man. The establishment of social justice is a way of accelerating the kingdom of God. Those who advance it

thereby express their allegiance to God's kingdom and practice prophetic religion.

World Peace

Prophetic religion, which stressed the belief in one God and one humanity, inevitably was first to voice the hope for world peace. Long before the days of the exile Isaiah declared:

> And He shall judge between the nations,
> And shall decide for many peoples;
> And they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
> And their spears into pruning-hooks;
> Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
> Neither shall they learn war any more. (Isa. 2:4)

Micah echoed Isaiah, and added significant words:

> But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig-tree;
> And none shall make them afraid. (Mic. 4:4)

Here is a philosophy of peace, complete and thorough, which anticipates the best and most modern thought on the subject. In the eyes of the prophets, disarmament was the necessary prelude to world peace. They knew that peace cannot be established through war, that a world of good will cannot result from hatred and slaughter, that security cannot be built after nations have dissipated their resources in the construction of engines of war. Embittered nations invariably revert to jungle ways. Terrified at the thought of remaining without defense, they place their confidence ever more in arms. Thus they cannot lay the foundations of an order of peace. World disarmament can come only when nations have confidence in each other's integrity and decency. A moral revolution must precede the beating of swords into plowshares and of spears into pruning-hooks.

Micah understood that basic to wars was insecurity —

hunger, want, lack of shelter, prestige and other essentials of life. He knew that so long as there were overflowing granaries in one land and famished masses in another war was inevitable. He knew that so long as men were hungry and helpless, and saw their wives and children undernourished and their parents inadequately fed, so long would they be filled with bitterness and hatred, so long would they be prepared rather to risk death on the battlefield, with the chance of victory and the thrill of adventure, than to sit by and watch their dear ones perish.

In other words, the prophet sensed that mankind can be redeemed from the scourge of war only by the establishment of universal social justice. When every man can sit under his vine and fig tree, happy and secure in the midst of his family, then he will be cured of the fears and terrors which are the emotional soil of conflict, then the propaganda of war will beat in vain against his soul. World-wide disarmament — the end of the manufacture of weapons of destruction, the end of taxation for military purposes, which takes food out of the mouths of children — will come only when man has so disciplined himself morally that he will establish justice. When justice is triumphant, the drive behind wars will have disappeared.

Prophetic religion with its emphasis on the equality of races and nations paves the way for universal good will. It contends that every nation is worth while and that every people has a contribution to make to the welfare of mankind. Were its mandate followed, children would be taught to love their own country, but also to appreciate and love other countries. Thus national prejudices would disappear and racial vanities would be seen for the ridiculous thing they are. Fellowship between nation and nation would be based not merely on sentimental wish-thinking but on knowledge of other peoples and admiration for their achievements.

Prophetic religion would demand the establishment of

an international court of justice to which nations could bring their grievances, confident that they would meet with fair treatment. It would demand the development of a code of international law whereby the normal differences between nations could be adjudicated and the rights of the weak protected against the insurgence of the strong. It would urge the setting up of an international police force which would function among the nations of the world as a domestic police force functions within every community. There is a difference between a police force and an army. An army acts in accordance with the will of one nation. A police force acts at the command of a court of justice, in accordance with law and the principles of equity and fair play.

Prophetic religion would demand an international parliament so that the nations of the world could meet together, discuss their common problems and legislate for their solution. It would provide protection of the rights of minorities and wherever possible guarantee them opportunities for their own cultural development. It would seek to level tariff barriers and establish a world-wide system of free trade. Eventually it would strive to do away with national boundaries — imaginary divisions which neither nature nor God intended — and thus build one humanity.

Despite the tragic happenings of our day, it must not be thought that this prophetic goal is farther off than ever. It may be that the present struggle is the death rattle of tribalism, the last stand of primitive philosophy against the forces of the modern world which are making for internationalism and universalism. The airplane and the radio have ended parochialism and destroyed isolation. They have made of the world one parish and of different peoples members of the same neighborhood. The old order is resisting this fact with might and fury. But the new order cannot be denied. A world in which all men will have equal share and in which the creative impulses of humanity

will be gloriously free may be near at hand. All nations will one day come up to the mountain of the Lord.

Not merely in the writings of the prophets is Judaism's love of peace manifest. " Peace be unto you " has been the accepted form of greeting between Jews and their neighbors for countless centuries. The circumstances of history helped to foster this love of peace. The events which deprived the Jews of a national existence made impossible the establishment of a military tradition among them. Until the past century, the European states excluded Jews from citizenship and therefore from service in the army; hence no Jewish warrior caste developed. When warriors were being hailed as the great heroes in Europe, the rabbis and other intellectual and spiritual leaders were the heroes in the ghetto. The result has been that in every nation of the world the Jews have been identified with peace movements. It is no accident that Zamenhoff, a Jew, was the creator of Esperanto, a universal language, or that Salmon O. Levinson, another Jew, fathered the Kellogg Pact. The ideal of international peace has been burned into Jewish consciousness by generations of experience of the curse of war and by centuries of drilling in the meaning of prophetic religion.

None the less, despite their strong devotion to the ways of peace, Jews have not refused to serve their countries in times of crisis. When permitted to do so, they have taken their place in the ranks of the soldiery and have suffered and died as gallantly as their fellow citizens. They have met the obligations of citizenship, as the military records of all nations testify.

There have been Jewish pacifists and conscientious objectors to war. It is possible so to interpret prophetic religion that under any and all circumstances a man is forbidden to violate his faith in the sacredness of human life by himself taking life. The conscientious objector can find authority for his stand in the teachings of Judaism. At its

meeting in Atlantic City some years ago, the Central Conference of American Rabbis recognized this and made the following declaration:

The Central Conference of American Rabbis reaffirms its conviction that conscientious objection to military service is in accordance with the highest interpretation of Judaism and therefore petitions the Government of the United States to grant to Jewish religious conscientious objectors to war the same exemption from military service as has long been granted to members of the Society of Friends and similar religious organizations.

However, prophetic religion can also be so interpreted as to permit participation in just wars. The right of the Maccabees to fight against the armies of Antiochus Epiphanes in order to preserve the faith has rarely been questioned by Jewish religionists. They have generally recognized that sometimes, so far as we can discern, war may be the lesser of two evils.

On this whole question of war, let me cite Dr. Judah Leon Magnes, the distinguished American rabbi who is the founder and chancellor of the Hebrew University at Jerusalem. Dr. Magnes was a pacifist during the First World War. In September 1939 he made the following statement to his students at the university:

Although the war confronts each one of us with a difficult spiritual problem, yet I shall ask you to bear with me if I discuss the problem of those radical pacifists and conscientious objectors, of whom I was one during the last war, and who now regard it as their duty to give their support to this war. I shall say something which it is hard to say. When I support this war, as unhappily I do, I know that thus I am in conscious rebellion against the divine command, "Thou shalt not kill." I have not the steadfastness, as once I thought I had, to fulfill this divine command under any and all circumstances. It is a terrible thing to realize that what one thought was part of one's religion is subject to change because of what a single man can do. Citi-

zenship can be changed, the place of a man's home, his friends, his interests, his social and political ideals. But when a man speaks of his religion, he speaks of his God, of that Absolute which gives life substance and meaning. It is for our sins that we are thus punished. God has hidden His face from us. We must throw ourselves into the dust and try to find forgiveness. We are transgressing His word knowingly, consciously. We do not know what else to do. What has happened? Satan is abroad. The incarnation of the devil sits on the German throne. It is the principle of evil made flesh. The devil has unleashed his war and who can sit back and not take sides, with the devil or against him? I shrink from the blasphemy that ours is the side of God, and that we are His chosen. But what I say is: There is the devil for all men to see, his voice for all men to hear, his deeds for all men to abhor, his plans for all men to frustrate. It is the idol in the Temple, the abomination of desolation, and it is ours to bring it down. Perhaps we may be brought down in the effort, for who knows the ways of God's wrath and punishments? But we must make the effort.

Only world justice can establish world peace. Not Hitler nor Mussolini nor the Japanese military clique alone brought about the Second World War. They merely exploited existing insecurities. The failure of humanity to establish world justice, to enable every man to sit under his vine and fig tree, is the primary cause of war. Prophetic religion teaches that war scourges the children of men when they violate the moral law. Justice and love must become the pillars of our society if wars are to be abolished. Until men obey the laws of God, their children will perish in fruitless wars, their labor will be destroyed by the ever more ingenious weapons that science will create. God is the author of peace, and man must cooperate with God to establish peace. And the keystone of peace is justice.

Marriage and Intermarriage

The family occupies a place of primary importance in the scheme of our civilization. It may almost be said that

where harmony is achieved in the family, life is a success, and where it is not achieved, life is a failure. Wealth, position, prestige cannot be adequate substitutes for a happy home. It is there that the individual is free to be himself and to realize his finest impulses; it is there that he finds both reassurance and inspiration. Psychiatrists today tell us that the child of an unhappy home is almost certain to carry through life the frustrations engendered by inharmonious family relationships and to work out his frustrations in ways inimical to society.

It is because children are reared in the home that society makes laws about marriage, the foundation of family life. Religion has always treated marriage as of tremendous importance because it involves the welfare of all concerned.

Marriage is more than the attempt of two people to find happiness for themselves. On its successful outcome depends the future of society and of civilization. That is why marriage ceremonies are made as beautiful and solemn as possible. Religion aims not only to give the young couple the finest associations in connection with the beginning of their life together, but also to impress on them and those in attendance the supreme value of family life. In Jewish tradition the marriage ceremony is known as *kiddushin,* which means " sanctification." The marriage vow contains the words, " Be thou consecrated unto me." Man and wife sanctify and dedicate themselves to each other.

Young people ought to be prepared for marriage. For many centuries it was assumed that no such preparation was necessary. Mother and father had none; why should the young people have it? If perfect matings had resulted and a perfect society had been evolved one might agree. Alas, such is not the case. Today there is available a large body of literature dealing with every phase of married life — physical and psychological, social and economic. Trained sociologists, with the cooperation of intelligent married couples, have gathered much valuable information, which

ought to be at the disposal of every young couple. Both the youth and the maiden should know what are the opportunities of marriage, what its pitfalls and difficulties and how they may be avoided.

But over and above all the home must be a shrine, and man and wife the priest and priestess ministering perpetually to the flame of love. With love the family is rich; without it, poor. With love the family succeeds; without it, it fails. With love the family is strong; without it, weak. If marriage is to endure there must be a recognition of spiritual values. It must be more than a pursuit of material success and a chase after pleasure. It must have noble aims and be lived under the aegis of God. Thus love will grow deeper and more significant. The cultivation of spiritual values through the observance of home religious ceremonies can be a most important factor in binding husband and wife together and in creating in the home a spirit of serenity.

Divorce, the dissolution of marriage, is at best a necessary evil. The separation of man and wife leaves psychological wounds that can never be healed. Human beings cannot be joined together and torn apart like the steel beams of a building. Emotions are involved, and the severance of personalities is bound to cause havoc. Divorce should always be a last resort.

Many divorces could be avoided if people were educated for marriage. In Denmark, for instance, any husband or wife, for any reason whatsoever, could have a divorce, but a year had to elapse between the application and the granting of a decree. In the interim the state arranged for the couple to confer with experts, who placed the best knowledge at their disposal. The result was that in most instances the difficulties were overcome. Divorce was negligible in Denmark, far less frequent than in the United States.

Divorce was not contrary to Jewish law, but it was very

rare among Jews. Jewish home life attained high levels, and unquestionably the purity and integrity of the home were factors in helping the Jews to survive the difficulties of centuries.

Since the days of Ezra and Nehemiah, Judaism has been opposed to intermarriage — not, however, for racial reasons. There is no biological antipathy between races. Europeans and Asiatics have intermarried and when these marriages have been on a high level the children have been normal and wholesome. But Jews are not a race. Judaism's opposition to intermarriage springs from a desire to preserve the faith. Jews are a minority in the world. History teaches that when a minority intermarries with the majority, it loses its identity and disappears. It was in this way that the ten lost tribes disappeared. Jews who believe that Judaism has a mission to civilization, that it has something to contribute to humanity, feel that if it is to be preserved the Jewish group must be preserved.

It is important that there be one faith and one religious experience in the home — important for the husband and wife and even more important for the children that are to be born. When the father goes to the church and the mother to the temple, when the father observes one form of holy day and the mother another, disharmony is introduced. Where conversion takes place, there is no intermarriage. Where the pledge is given that the children will be reared in accordance with the Jewish tradition, the reason for opposition to intermarriage is nullified.

In America, marriages between Jews and non-Jews have not been infrequent, and some of them have proved very happy. Many young people have come to the synagogue by way of intermarriage. Such new members have sometimes taken positions of leadership in Jewish congregational life. Through them the synagogue has been strengthened and the Jewish group enriched, and prophetic religion has found new votaries.

Judaism and Christianity

Christians who have followed these pages or through other sources are familiar with Judaism know that prophetic religion, which is the foundation of temple and synagogue, is likewise the foundation of church and cathedral. If a thousand ties bind together the followers of all great ethical religions, then a thousand and one ties bind together Jew and Christian. Not only do we share our common humanity and recognize our kinship with the same God, but we also recognize that our spiritual traditions grew out of the same soil and were breathed into by the same soul. Jew and Christian alike recognize in the teachings of the prophets the acme of religion. Jew and Christian alike revere and glory in the memory of Isaiah and Jeremiah, Amos and Hosea. Jew and Christian alike pray through those exquisite poems, the Psalms. Church worship and synagogue worship are parallel in many respects. Church festivals and synagogue festivals have many common origins. Church music and synagogue music are closely linked. Synagogue and church look upon Palestine as the holy land and Jerusalem as the holy city, recognize as sacred the common biblical literature, and cherish the early history of Israel, in which, as both believe, God revealed himself. Whatever differences exist between Jew and Christian, between rabbi and minister and priest, they are insignificant alongside these common bonds.

When Christians seek to compliment a Jew, they say that he reveals fine Christian character. They mean that he has love for justice, passion for truth, sympathy for the weak, a sense of human brotherhood. These ideals which in the mind of the Christian constitute Christian character are the ideals of the synagogue, the teaching of the prophets, the wisdom of the rabbis. Neither the church nor the synagogue has a monopoly of them. What Christians mean by Christian character, Jews mean by Jewish character.

As a result of this common ethical emphasis, Jews and Christians should engage in common enterprises for the welfare of humanity — for the betterment of labor, for the improvement of industry, for the abolition of war, for the establishment of justice, for fair play to agriculture, for the purification of government, for the cleansing of politics, for the building of domestic and international good will. Indeed they are thus working together in some places. In one American city the clergy of all denominations, Catholic, Protestant and Jewish, are organized in a commission on social justice, and together have championed the rights of labor and helped to adjudicate industrial disputes, promote civic welfare, and voice the common idealism of Judaism and Christianity on vital public questions. Similar efforts have been successful throughout the United States.

Through such cooperation, Jew, Catholic and Protestant have learned better to appreciate each the others, but none has retreated one iota from convictions dearly held or theologies believed sacred and significant. Jews still adhere to that pure ethical monotheism which constitutes the Jewish contribution to civilization. Christians still interpret Jesus in accordance with their tradition, some insisting that he is the very son of God, others holding that he is a great moral teacher, divine only as all men are divine. But whatever the attitude toward Jesus, Christianity has not been diluted by its fellowship with Jews, nor has Judaism been diluted by its fellowship with Christians. Perhaps both Jews and Christians have benefited religiously from these contacts. Perhaps social passion, so strong in the synagogue, has affected the church, and the sense of mysticism so strong in the church has influenced the synagogue.

In some synagogues, the New Testament is taught so that Jews may understand and appreciate not merely Judaism's influence on Christianity but also the uniqueness of Christianity. Children of church schools and synagogue schools interchange visits. Perhaps the crowning result of this in-

terreligious friendship is the exchange of pulpits between rabbi and minister, an occurrence which is not uncommon in the United States and has also taken place in Canada. Surely no finer tribute can be paid to Judaism by the church than this, that a rabbi is invited to stand before the Christian altar and from that sacred place interpret the will of God. Surely no finer tribute can be paid to Christianity by Judaism than this, that a minister is asked to stand in the synagogue before the open ark which contains the sacred scrolls and there speak the message of religion.

The masses of Jews and Christians have responded wholeheartedly to this fellowship. They fail to understand why religion, which preaches love and justice, should tolerate hatred and antagonism toward men of other faiths. They welcome these adventures which bring them closer to their fellow men.

Judaism seeks this good will not merely because Jews are a persecuted minority group, but because good will is in keeping with prophetic religion and ill-will is immoral, sinful and ungodly. In the atmosphere of American freedom, the gulf between church and synagogue has in part been bridged and the wounds of centuries have in part been healed. Such movements toward friendship and fellowship will undoubtedly continue. The other way, the old way of hostility, bitterness and bigotry, is unwanted by God and man. Hatred in the name of God is blasphemy and a repudiation of him. Love for all men — those who believe and those who disbelieve, those who worship under the same roof and those who worship under other roofs — is obedience to God, the practice of that prophetic religion to which both Judaism and Christianity subscribe and which is truly referred to as the Hebrew-Christian heritage.

The Best Religion

Most people if asked suddenly which is the best religion would unhesitatingly answer that the one they profess is

the best. Jews would say Judaism; Christians, Christianity; Mohammedans, Islam. This of course is not an objective judgment based on a careful examination of all religions to discover which offers to its worshipers the soundest philosophy of life, the truest conception of God and the highest ethics. There are very few people who make any fundamental change of religion in their lifetime. They may shift from orthodoxy to liberalism and from fundamentalism to modernism, or vice versa, but they will be able to find in their own group a church or temple that will accommodate their change of viewpoint.

The fact is that it is difficult to overcome habits ingrained during the tenderest years or to throw overboard a sacred experience which father and mother have made possible. For most people, the religion in favor of which they have been conditioned in childhood is the religion that can function most effectively. So when an individual says that his religion is the best, his statement has the same value as a Frenchman's assertion that France is the best country, or a Brazilian's that Brazil is the best, or an American's that the United States is the best. It is an expression of emotional loyalty rather than an intellectual or spiritual judgment.

But the feeling of religious superiority is a bar to harmonious relationships among religions. To the Christian, for example, the church symbolizes the highest values; to the Jew, the synagogue. There is no question here as to which is right. What is needed to improve the relations between Jews and Christians is appreciation on the part of both. For some centuries now the two religions have tolerated each other, but toleration is not enough. We tolerate something ugly, something we despise, something inferior or objectionable, and consider such toleration a moral achievement on our part. But where men merely tolerate each other there can be no fellowship, no brother-

hood, no good will, for there is no equality. It is a superior condescending to an inferior.

The great eighteenth-century German dramatist Lessing, seeking to improve the relation between Christian and Jew, aimed an intellectual shaft at this type of condescending toleration. Inspired by his friendship for Moses Mendelssohn he wrote *Nathan the Wise*. The chief character of that drama is a noble old Jew, Nathan, known to all as "the wise." The scene is Jerusalem under a Mohammedan ruler, Saladin; the time, that of the Crusades.

Saladin, being in need of funds, determines to secure them by tricking Nathan into speaking disrespectfully of the state religion, Mohammedanism. He summons the wise old man and asks him which is the best religion — his own, Mohammedanism; Nathan's, Judaism; or the Crusaders', Christianity. Nathan answers with the story of the three rings.

An Oriental prince came into possession of a beautiful ring, and announced that he would give it to his kindest, gentlest and noblest son and thus indicate who was to succeed him on the throne. The son was to appoint his successor in the same way, and so on down the line. This tradition became established. When the prince died, the son who possessed the ring was to succeed him.

In this succession there came a prince who judged his three sons to be of equal worth, and in a moment of weakness he promised each of them the ring. Then he was suddenly stricken by an illness known to be fatal. His three sons pressed him for the ring. Not wishing to break his promise, the prince called a skilled jeweler and bade him make two rings exactly like the original. The jeweler did his work well and the prince gave each son a ring. On the father's death each of the sons claimed the throne by virtue of possessing the ring. Soon they were quarreling bitterly among themselves. The jeweler who had made the two

new rings had died, and no craftsman was able to determine which was the original and which were the replicas. Finally the matter came before a court of justice. The judge said to the brothers: " The ring was to be in the possession of the kindest, noblest and gentlest. None of you has shown that character in this angry quarrel. I shall defer my judgment. Go among men, all of you, and in time I shall determine by how nobly you have lived which of you has the genuine ring."

This was the story Nathan told the sultan. Then the wise old Jew explained: " The three religions are like the three rings. All have great teachings, and Jews, Christians and Mohammedans alike, as they demonstrate love for humanity and a sense of justice, prove that theirs is the true and best religion." Not only what religionists profess, but what they practice, is the criterion of a noble faith.

Through *Nathan the Wise,* which became one of the most popular plays in Germany, Lessing hoped to spread his ideal of religious appreciation. When religious men can appreciate the faith of their neighbor, when they recognize that other traditions besides their own offer rich spiritual experiences and have encouraged sacrificial living and inspired their followers to a noble way of life, then they show that they themselves possess a faith that is unsurpassed.

It is not easy to achieve that mood of appreciation. We readily sense the beauty and power of our own ceremonies and traditions, made precious to us by experience and association. But the traditions and ceremonies of others we are likely to look upon as meaningless or superstitious. Yet we can learn to appreciate the other man's religion.

Some years ago at a summer resort I became acquainted with an intellectual and progressive physician, a member of the Episcopal Church. I must confess that I was amazed when he informed me one day that he periodically went to communion. When we had become good friends I ven-

tured to ask him why he, trained in the modern school of thought, participated in this ceremony. (During the communion service the worshiper approaches the altar and eats a wafer which is said to be the body of Jesus and drinks wine which is said to be the blood of Jesus.) I asked him whether he actually believed that he was partaking of the body and blood of Jesus. I shall never forget his answer: "Communion is for me one of the most hallowed experiences of my life. Whenever I participate in it I come away moved to the depths, with the noblest resolves forming in my mind and the gentlest spirit animating my being. If I do not literally eat the body of Jesus and drink his blood, I nevertheless seem to feel part of him entering me and making a better man and a better physician of me." I had never shared in a communion service and therefore could not appreciate what it might mean to a believer. His words taught me appreciation and I became more reverent.

I had a parallel experience when I visited a shrine in Rome known as the sacred staircase. Catholic tradition is that whoever ascends this staircase on his knees, reciting certain prayers, receives a remission of seven years in purgatory. When I heard this I said to myself, "Ridiculous!" But I was curious to see what happens to people who accept this belief, so I walked up another staircase and looked down at the pious and devout who were slowly making the ascent. Soon an old woman approached the shrine. That she was poverty-stricken was plain to see. Her face was lined with suffering and sorrow, her hair was gray, her hands were hardened with toil. She seemed almost ready for death. Painfully, as it seemed, she got on her knees and began to pray. With great effort she raised herself from step to step. I thought she would be worn out by the time she reached the top. But when she finally finished the ascent she rose with startling agility. I saw a new light in her eyes and sensed a new vigor in her body, and believed that new hope suffused her being. For her this was a sacred

staircase and the reward of seven years' remission was hers already. I approached the shrine in the spirit of rational criticism. She approached it with love and faith and thus secured a blessing.

Experiences like these make us appreciative of and sympathetic with the religious practices of others. They help us to realize that what our religion does for us, other people's religions do for them. They make us shrink from answering the question which is the best religion. Rather they lead us to recognize that the religion we profess is adequate for us and fulfills our needs. The religion of our neighbor does the same for him. This recognition is not based on a desire to make possible fellowship between religionists. It is not wishful thinking. It is verified by the newer researches in the field of religion.

The science of comparative religion teaches that the faiths which have survived the testing of centuries and function to this day all developed from humble beginnings to lofty spiritual conceptions and high ethical standards. A distinguished German scholar, Max Müller, was the pioneer in this science. With infinite patience and care he translated the sacred books of the East into Occidental languages and thus revealed to the West the beauty of thought, the loftiness of aspiration and the spirituality of the God-idea of the religions of Asia. As a result of his stupendous work it is no longer possible for the informed Christian or Jew to speak contemptuously of Hinduism, Buddhism or Confucianism. The ideas forged in the souls of the prophets and re-echoed by Christian teachers are paralleled in the thoughts of Chinese sages and Hindu seers. Five hundred years before the birth of Jesus, Confucius, the revered and now deified Chinese sage, had formulated the Golden Rule, stating it negatively. A generation before Jesus the gentle Rabbi Hillel, who had never read Confucius' Analects, formulated the same rule in the same fashion.

Centuries before the advent of Judaism pious Egyptians

ordered inscribed upon their tombs the statement that they had tried to be just and kind, had sought to help the poor and protect the widow and the orphan. Egypt produced a prophetic emperor who attempted to establish monotheism among his people and did indeed uproot idolatry from his realm, only to have it restored after his death. The psalms of Babylonia reveal tendencies toward ethical monotheism. In the law codes of Hammurabi we discern the beginnings of the ideal of social justice. In the ancient poetry of the Hindus we find lofty spiritual and ethical ideas. By studying comparative religion we lose our religious vanity and arrogance and our sense of superiority. We begin to see that God has sent his prophets and teachers to many peoples.

The science of psychology of religion teaches that the religious hunger is universal and that the yearning for God and the need for prayer are the experience of all men. Here there are no denominational barriers, no national boundaries, no racial restrictions. The same spiritual hunger which leads Jews to the synagogue leads Christians to the church, Mohammedans to the mosque, Buddhists to the temple. The walls of houses of worship may divide us, but the spiritual hunger of humanity unites us.

How well I realized that when I visited the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Montreal. Into that cathedral I walked in a mood for religious experience. The first thing I saw was the image of a saint and a group of kneeling worshipers before it. I ceased being the mystic and became the rationalist. With an unworthy air of arrogance I said to myself, "My religion is superior. It forbids the worship of images" — this though I know that Catholics do not worship images but appeal to the saint represented by the image to intercede for them at the throne of the Most High. I marched on and came upon another shrine with the image of another saint. In the semi-darkness I discerned the crouched form of a kneeling worshiper, a young crippled

lad, down whose cheeks the tears were trickling. I could feel him reaching out through the image to his God, desperately seeking for some additional strength to face his handicapped life with dignity and heroism. The tears came to my own eyes and I, a rabbi, prayed with this Catholic lad in this Christian shrine. I said to myself, " Surely God is in this place and I knew it not." This youth on his knees in prayer symbolized for me humanity on its knees in prayer through the ages — humanity awed and bewildered by the riddle of life, frustrated and crushed by the problems of daily living, reaching out for hope, for courage, for assurance, for belief in its dignity and confidence in its worth.

Frail mortals speak of the best religion. What matters it to God where men seek him, whether before the ark of the synagogue or the crucifix of the church, the image of the Buddha or under the dome of the mosque? What matters it to God in what tongue men pray to him, whether in the classic accents of Hebrew or the stately cadences of Latin, the ancient rhythms of the Upanishads or the familiar speech of modern times? What matters it to God what the form of worship, the style of the ritual, the vestments of the clergy; whether men call him Yahveh or Christ, Buddha or Confucius? So long as they know he is one, so long as they think of him as ideal justice and love, so long as they seek to pattern their lives after his nature. In the light of this knowledge, how dare we speak of the best religion?

Judaism is adequate for me. In classic ritual, in martyred experience, in memory-laden festivals, it has provided vehicles whereby I can reach God, whereby I can allow him to influence my life and mold my character and motivate my being for the best. What Judaism does for me, Christianity or Mohammedanism may do for you.

But, you may ask, if all religions have so much in common and all seek the same God, why is it necessary to have so many? Why not create a universal religion? Most of us have at some time or other succumbed to the lure of this

dream of a humanity worshiping together and worshiping alike. Some there are who feel that theirs ought to become the universal religion and patiently await the time when all men will be converted to this point of view. History tells of individuals who conceived as so all-important the establishment of their own faith as the universal one that they were prepared to slay anyone who refused to accept it. In our age of enlightenment and tolerance it has frequently been proposed that all existing religions should unite. Thus, it is thought, religious bigotry and hatred and the eternal bickering among denominations would come to an end and men would live at peace forever and ever.

I believe in a universal religion, but I do not believe in a uniform religion, and for several reasons. In the first place, to eliminate religious differences in order to create harmony among believers would be moral defeat. It is not religious differences that cause the trouble, but the fact that men transform these differences into antagonisms. There is no moral or spiritual reason why I should hate an individual whose idea of God does not fully coincide with mine and who prefers to worship on Sunday rather than on Saturday. If I do hate such an individual the correction should be made in my own soul. Otherwise I dodge a moral challenge and reveal spiritual flabbiness.

Why should not God-fearing men and women fully and freely recognize the right of their neighbor to worship in accordance with the dictates of his own conscience without being penalized socially, politically, educationally or in any other way? Ill-will between religionists is a violation of God's commandment. It cannot be overcome by removing religious differences — indeed this would only intensify the moral problem. The ill-will in the soul of man which now expresses itself in religious hatred would then find expression in some other hatred. The word of God is clear and explicit: " Love thy neighbor as thyself " — whatever his race, whatever his convictions, whatever the vestments of his

clergy. The challenge to religion is to create an attitude of appreciation for the other man's worship so that every believer can retain his differences and yet not forfeit fellowship with his neighbors.

In the second place, not only would the establishment of a uniform religion be morally bad; it would be practically impossible. To this the whole history of religion bears witness. Many persons have sought to found a religion which all men could accept, but invariably the result was that they added one more religion or one more denomination to those already existing. Mohammed, disturbed by the differences between Judaism and Christianity, offered to his age a faith which borrowed from both. In the Koran he gave recognition to both Jewish and Christian scriptures, to both Moses and Jesus. He hoped thus to create a religion in which Jew and Christian as well as his own Arab kinsmen could unite. He succeeded only in giving another religion to the world.

Again, some years ago an earnest group of Protestants in the United States, desiring to put an end to the many divisions in Protestantism, came to the conclusion that Christianity had gone astray from the teachings of Jesus. These Disciples of Christ, as they called themselves (they are sometimes designated as Campbellites after their leader), believed that all Christians could unite around Jesus' teachings, and on this basis organized what they hoped would be a universal religion. Their efforts accomplished the very thing they were intended to offset: they added one more to the already numerous Christian denominations.

If it were possible by the wave of a magic wand to eliminate from the world all temples, churches, mosques and synagogues, all creeds, theologies and rituals, and if one man were then given power to establish a single religion on the ruins of the many old religions, within a few days vigorous protests would make themselves heard. Some people would not be satisfied with the new religion's defini-

tion of God; some would criticize its social or psychological emphases; some would object to the vestments of the clergy or the architecture of the sanctuary. They would organize new sects, new creeds, new rites, and in no time at all there would be as many religions as ever.

A universal, uniform religion then would be morally bad and practically impossible. But it would also be esthetically unsatisfactory. What the world needs today is variety. Its great danger is from regimentation, political, educational and artistic. Regimentation is going on not merely in the dictatorships; it has made inroads in the democracies. It is one of the effects of mass production and mass consumption. It is the effect of radios pouring out each day the same stories and the same views, and of chain stores advertising in chain newspapers. We are beginning to look alike, speak alike, think alike. If this tendency toward regimentation continues life is going to become very dull and barren, and the spirit of man will revolt against this dullness and barrenness.

Religion with its many symbols, its diverse architecture, its variety of music and ritual, its differences of emphasis, offers to the soul of man something it must have. Not more uniformity is the need, but more diversity; not more sameness, but more individual expression, for the enrichment of personality and the realization of creative abilities. The call of the muezzin, the tolling of church bells, the blasts of the *shofar* all lend beauty to life. All the great religions have developed stirring music, noble ritual, historic festivals, which not only relieve the monotony of existence but bring tranquillity and peace to the restless spirit. They prevent the tender of the machine from himself becoming a machine.

And, finally, a uniform universal religion would be psychologically inadequate. Alike though they be in essentials, human beings are different. Some are inclined to mysticism, others to rationalism. Some revel in ritual,

others are repelled by it. Some desire fixed authoritarian creeds, others glory in the liberty of the individual conscience. No one religious formula could possibly fill the needs of all men.

Nevertheless, after all is said, there is only one religion, as there is only one God. In the light of the one God the varieties of religious tradition are like the colors of the rainbow, all blending together. There is basically only one religion, as there is basically only one need for religion. There is the universal hunger of man. There is the universal mystery which confronts him. There is the universal bewilderment about life. There is the universal longing for companionship with the universe, for oneness with God. Whatever the ways through which this longing is stilled, they represent merely different approaches to the same God. Some prefer the paved highway of traditional religion, others the adventurous road of liberal religion. But there is the same ascent, the same beckoning mountain peak, the same ultimate goal in the heavens above, the home of God revealed by his prophets of many faiths.

The Jewish Congregation

In the modern community the Jewish congregation — free and independent, subject to no ecclesiastical authority, subordinate only to the will of God — is the repository and the guardian of prophetic religion. Wherever there is a Jew who appreciates the significance of Judaism, there will be a Jew anxious to strengthen the congregation, that it may carry on its task of preserving prophetic religion for the blessing of all men and the hurt of none. This is the primary concern of every Jew who feels the call of history, the call of the covenant made between God and Israel, the call of the idealism of Jewish teachings and the call to translate them into life through concrete acts of peace and good will.

In other words, the business of the Jewish congregation

is the business of prophetic religion. Social justice and racial equality, world peace and international good will, equity for labor and agriculture and justice for the employer, security for the aged and opportunity for youth, integrity in government and clean politics — all come within its purview. The congregation which is concerned merely with the practical details of keeping up a shrine and unconcerned about the ethical and moral challenges of life is not heeding the word of God nor fulfilling its mission. If it is not betraying prophetic religion, it certainly is not articulating it.

It is sometimes urged that for Jews to champion the rights of workers where industrial bourbons have power, to advocate peace where militarism is enthroned, to espouse the cause of racial equality where racial bigotry is sanctioned, to demand political reforms where corrupt machine bosses are entrenched — for Jews to be the voices of enlightenment where the minions of darkness have much influence would be a suicidal policy leading to suffering, persecution and perhaps annihilation. My answer is that for Jews to betray social justice and world peace in order to save themselves is spiritual suicide and a mockery of the glories and martyrdom of Jewish history.

But will not Jews suffer if they become the spokesmen of prophetic religion? Yes, at times they may suffer as others have suffered for humanitarian causes. Without such suffering mankind cannot advance. The pioneers in all fields were ready to sacrifice everything they had for the ideal to which they were dedicated. Noble men and women have never hesitated to suffer and die for good causes. The prophets knew that their ministry would bring them suffering and sorrow, but they could not dodge it because they could not flee from God. The pioneer Americans suffered and many died to clear the wilderness for our comfort and make possible our civilization. Nor did Jewish leaders who urged their people to become the bearers of God's word

hold out to them an easy, comfortable life. Isaiah knew that a people which champions prophetic religion will have a difficult task. Read again his words quoted on page 62 above. If in some far-off divine day it can be said that through our bruises and suffering mankind was healed, how happy we would indeed be!

To every Jew comes the challenge to align himself with all men and women of all creeds and nations who care to beat swords into plowshares — who care to establish justice, to make liberty available to all, to strengthen the weak and help the fallen, to banish hate and bring the nations together; who care to build the kingdom of God. As the individual Jew gives himself to these causes, he becomes worthy of his heritage and earns the blessing of Almighty God.

Judaism proclaims from the housetops its hope and dream of a regenerated society, a commonwealth of man based on justice and brotherhood. To work toward this goal is the great task of the temple. What of it if the goal is difficult to reach and its realization remote? Judaism knows that it will be realized because it represents the command of God. The last word about mankind is not for dictators to speak. It is not theirs to pronounce the fate and destiny of the human race. There is one God in the universe, and his plan of the redemption of humanity and the realization of the divine in every man through the practice of love and justice will be fulfilled. This is the future of mankind, this the destiny of the race. This is the Jewish plan for civilization. This is the task of Jewish congregations. This is Judaism — a way of life revealed by God to his prophets.

The Rabbi

In the days of the Judean commonwealth, all the ritual functions of Judaism were performed by the priests and centered largely about the temple. The priests, the descendants of Aaron, were in charge of the holy of holies, and

the responsibility for the maintenance of the sacrificial cult and all the religious services connected with it rested on them. They were assisted by the Levites. These were the only classes of professional religious men. The Bible knows of no rabbinical functionaries.

It will be remembered that, in the endeavor to establish the belief in one God, all altars except the one in the temple at Jerusalem were destroyed under the influence of the prophets. Pious Jews would come to the holy city on the three pilgrimage festivals, Passover, Shavuoth and Succoth, to bring their offerings in the temple and thus fulfill the ritual demands.

There were six hundred and thirteen religious duties, binding on every Jew. The observance of the dietary laws, the keeping of the Sabbath, the celebration of the holy days, were obligations which every member of the faith was expected to meet. No religious leader could fulfill them for him by proxy. For example, the lighting of the Sabbath candles was the duty of the housewife and mother. The recital of the prayers thrice daily and the use of the phylacteries were obligatory for every male Jew over thirteen years of age.

Laymen presided at many functions which in modern life are the special prerogatives of ordained ministers of religion. Funeral and marriage services, for example, did not in ancient Judaism require any specially ordained clergy. There were regulations for the proper burial of the dead, but these could be carried out by laymen. The funeral service consisted of the recital of a few psalms. Only on very rare occasions, at the burial of an extraordinarily distinguished personality, was there a eulogy. There has never been any specific funeral ritual which could not be performed by any layman. Much the same is true of marriage. The marriage ceremony consists of a vow taken by the groom, an assent to the marriage contract, which was a legal document, and the pronouncing of a number of benedic-

tions. These benedictions could be uttered by any layman. In Orthodox Judaism, to this day the rabbi need not perform a marriage ceremony.

Even the reading of the prayers in the synagogue did not require a specially empowered individual. Any Jewish layman could lead in any service. Because the service was frequently chanted, an individual with a good voice was usually invited to lead. The cantor, who to this day chants the service in Orthodox congregations, is not ordained and need not have received any specific training for his work. An Orthodox rabbi has no special part in the service, except that he occupies a seat of honor at the altar. He may occasionally give a sermon, but need not. The traditional rabbi was not a ritualistic functionary in any sense of the word.

It is to be recalled that the synagogue arose in Babylon during the captivity, when the exiles from Palestine were prevented by force of circumstance from participating in the established temple ritual. Not only was the temple destroyed, but they were in no position to make the long journey to the holy land, even if their captors had permitted it. The synagogue service arose as a substitute for the temple service. It was entirely in charge of the laity and there were no provisions for any priestly functionary. The Torah does not command the establishment of an institution like the synagogue. Therefore all the functions which in the minds of modern men are the chief functions of professional religious leaders were unknown to the synagogue and never did require specially trained individuals.

What then was the function of the rabbi? To make this clear it will be necessary to recall the story of God's revelation to Moses. According to Orthodox Judaism, God revealed his will to Moses on Mount Sinai. Moses wrote it down in the Torah, whose six hundred and thirteen commandments constitute the right way of life. But Moses also received from God explanations of the six hundred and thirteen commandments, which he did not write down.

These explanations made up the oral law, without which the commandments of the Torah could not be accurately understood. The talmudic book, "The Ethics of the Fathers," gives the traditional view of the process whereby God's will was transmitted. Moses delivered to Joshua not only the Torah but also the oral law. Joshua handed them down to the elders, the elders to the prophets, and the prophets to the men of the Great Synagogue, of which the rabbis in time became members.

In the course of time, the oral law was written down in the Mishna and the Talmud. To obey all the commandments of God one had to know not only the Bible and the Talmud, but also the commentaries on these made by Jewish scholars subsequent to the editing of the Talmud. Those who best knew the Bible and the Talmud and the commentaries were best qualified to interpret God's will to their fellow Jews. These men were the rabbis. *Rabbi* means "my teacher." The rabbis were ordained for their teaching task after they had demonstrated that they were masters of the Bible, the Talmud and the commentaries. The greater the rabbi's knowledge, the greater was his influence. All religious problems, moral and spiritual as well as ritual, were brought to him. In giving his decisions he did not rely upon his own reasoning, but was guided by God's word as revealed in the sacred books. The rabbi was the spokesman of God in the community, the interpreter of God's will. He was not necessarily affiliated with a community, but usually he was recognized by a community or a number of communities. By virtue of his scholarship, he was a religious authority, not a religious functionary.

The rabbi's position in Jewish life was indeed an exalted one. No individual in the community occupied as important a place or received as much public respect and affection as he. To be related to a rabbi was proof that one came of good family. The belles of the community hoped

that they would be lucky enough to marry a rabbi. The richest and most beautiful girls were honored to become rabbis' brides.

The great ambition of every Jewish youth was to qualify for the rabbinate. Every family considered it a duty and a privilege to make possible the training of one son for this office. To any community in which a famous rabbi lived Jewish students flocked to study under him. Jewish families vied with each other in giving food, shelter and other necessities to the students. The period of study was long and arduous. After having covered all the known lore time and again until he was at home in it, the student was admitted to examination before a board of rabbis. If they found the candidate's knowledge accurate and his discernment profound they would declare him worthy, and three rabbis would then decree his ordination. In the ordination ceremony a rabbi placed his hands upon the candidate that the spirit of God might thus be transmitted. Thereafter he was qualified to serve as a religious authority. The rabbi was not a ritualistic functionary, but a religious teacher, a religious guide for the community. He was the religious supreme court.

Because ritual became an important factor in preserving the Jew, many of the problems which the rabbi was called upon to solve involved matters of ritual. It must be remembered that the ritual was considered of great importance because, like the ethical and spiritual laws, it was believed to come from God. With the development of Reform Judaism in America, the rabbi as the authority on ritual ceased to have much significance. In denying the divine authorship of the Torah, Reform Judaism denied the sacred origin of all of Jewish ritual. Having lost divine sanction and being out of tune with the needs of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, ritual gradually ceased to play an important part in the life of Reform Jews, and in

some cases was almost completely eliminated. Thus the rabbi was no longer needed as an authority in this field. It would seem therefore that his function would be seriously impaired.

Quite the contrary has been the case. There remained in the Torah and in Jewish tradition a great body of law which was spiritual and ethical. Liberated from the claims of the ritual law, the rabbis could concentrate their thought and energy upon the ethical and spiritual. Their interest shifted from the legislation of the Torah to the teachings of the prophets. They found that they could focus their ministry upon prophetic Judaism, its universalism, the application of its teachings to everyday society.

This new trend in the function of the rabbinate has been clearly evidenced in the preaching of Reform rabbis in America. Prophetic Judaism was concerned with every phase of life. It minimized ritual and emphasized the application of justice and love everywhere and always. By historic necessity American Reform rabbis began to consider themselves successors to the prophets and to make prophetic teachings the hub around which their office centered. They became the teachers of prophetic Judaism first to their own congregations, but they carried its message beyond the synagogue to the community, to the state and to the nation.

The American rabbi has not been satisfied with merely teaching the principles of prophetic Judaism; he has actually allied himself with movements which in his judgment seem dedicated to advancing those principles. In movements for prison reform and for good government, in associations promoting a better understanding of marriage, in peace groups, in organizations seeking to develop industrial harmony and social and racial justice, the rabbi has taken an active and often a leading part. He has been an articulate public conscience. From his pulpit he has discussed

all phases of life — industrial, economic, political — and brought them all beneath the judgment of God's commandments as revealed by the prophets.

At times men and women in the congregation have questioned the relationship between a strike of coal miners and Judaism, between the pay of factory workers and religion, between foul slums and God. These men and women have labored under the misconception that Judaism is only a religion of ritual, or that it is not concerned with social issues. But it must be said to the credit of Reform congregations that in most cases they have appreciated the prophetic role which the rabbi must play if he is to be faithful to his teachings. In the past fifty years very few rabbis have had serious difficulties with their congregations because of the forthrightness of their utterances, because of their condemnation of economic injustices, or because of their alliance with unpopular though ethical causes. In most cases the pulpits of Reform Judaism in America have become the sounding-board for the eternal principles. Jewish laymen have begun to recognize that the business of religion is not merely to maintain Jewish observances, but to establish God's kingdom of justice and peace on earth. The rabbi walks in the footsteps of the prophets. Upon him rests the obligation to make their message articulate in modern life.

Significantly enough, the American Reform rabbi's emphasis on prophetic Judaism has helped to break down the barriers between church and synagogue and to create bonds of friendship and fellowship between rabbi, minister and priest. Like rabbis, teachers of Christianity have begun to re-examine their tradition. They have recognized that its most important element is the legacy of the great prophets of Israel. Having, in consequence, begun to preach what they called the social gospel — the application of the prophetic teachings to modern society — they found in the rabbi, who considered himself in the prophetic succession, a kindred spirit, and all over the United States rabbis, min-

isters and priests have become friends, working together in many causes which are hastening the advent of the kingdom of God. Judaism and Christianity meet on common ground when they stand on the platform of prophetic Judaism. Judaism and Christianity, rabbi, minister and priest, join in hailing the prophets of Israel and in recognizing their teachings as the supreme and noblest way of life.

The way of prophecy is not always easy. The prophets of old were not always greeted by applause, nor were they popular idols. They were compelled frequently to say harsh things, but true, about their friends, about their society, about conditions in their own community. Those in positions of power and privilege at times resented their message, became indignant at their challenge, and persecuted, exiled and outlawed them. The prophets were human beings. They preferred commendation to criticism, appreciation to hatred, applause to persecution. But they were not the masters of their fate. They were the spokesmen of God. They had to speak what God whispered to their souls. They had to speak regardless of the cost to their personal careers. They had to speak heedless of consequences to themselves and to their dear ones. They spoke even though they knew that their message would be ignored. They voiced the divine word even though they knew it would be unheeded. They feared neither kings nor armies, neither public opinion nor society. They feared only that they would inadequately proclaim the message of the God of humanity. They feared only that they would not be energetic enough in advancing the outposts of his kingdom.

So too their successor, the rabbi in our age. His success is to be gauged neither by the acclaim he receives nor by the love of his congregants, but by how completely and courageously he has given himself to his supreme task of speaking the word of God and applying it to specific situa-

tions in his own congregation, in his own community, in his own state and in his own nation. The rabbi must court neither popularity nor applause, neither praise nor good will. He must be the spokesman of God and must be prepared to take the consequences. When discouraged and weary, he can find strength where the prophets of Israel found it, in communion with God, in meeting him face to face and drinking of the waters of his salvation.

Particularly today when tyranny and injustice, brutality and oppression are sweeping on to material victory, the rabbi as the heir of the prophets must stand everywhere and proclaim his unshaken faith in the existence of God, his supreme conviction in the dawn of God's kingdom, his profound belief in the decency of man, his unwavering confidence that God has decreed a dignified and decent destiny for humanity. Thus he must bolster the morale of people, maintain their hope, keep alive their enthusiasm, that they may join him in working for the kingdom of God.

Upon no religious teacher rests a greater responsibility than upon the modern rabbi. By virtue of his ancestry and his history, he stands next to the prophets of Israel. They call for him. They beckon to him. They challenge him. Upon his shoulders hangs their mantle and he must lead the caravan of humanity to the promised land of justice and peace. He must lead it, if need be with bleeding hands, with aching head, with wounded body and bruised heart. He must never show a trace of weakness or surrender. He knows that when he speaks the eternal verities of the prophets of Israel, he speaks the will of God. And the ultimate victory belongs to God. The ultimate law to prevail is the law of God, whose glory fills the whole earth. That is the task of the rabbi who in the modern world must guard the heritage of the prophets and articulate its message until the kingdom of God be established on earth, and the teachings of prophetic religion woven firmly into the texture of the life of all men.

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